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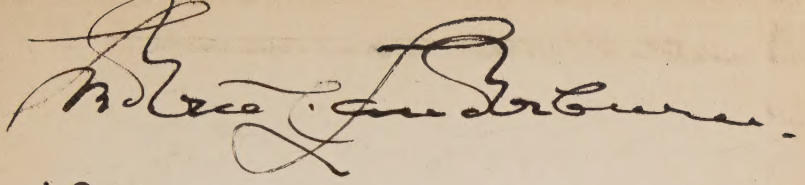

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GARMENTS OF PRAISE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Long Will: A Romance

The most perfect imaginative reconstruction of the Mediæval England of Piers Plowman which has yet appeared. Already a classic.

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Never have the joy and the beauty of the Church's traditions and practices been so delightfully expressed as in these delicate and lovely stories of the little boy and his angel.

With 8 Illustrations
by Margaret Ely Webb

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY
NEW YORK CITY

GARMENTS OF PRAISE

A Miracle Cycle

BY

FLORENCE CONVERSE

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THE CYCLE

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NOTE

The first performances of *The Blessed Birthday* and *Santa Conversazione* were given in 1919, at the Bennett School, Millbrook, New York, with Edith Wynne Matthison as the American Soldier in *Santa Conversazione*, and Charles Rann Kennedy as the Spirit of Tolstoi. *The Blessed Birthday* was first published by Messrs. E. P. Dutton & Company, New York, and Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons, London, in 1917. *Thy Kingdom Come* is included in the Cycle by the courtesy of *The Atlantic Monthly*.

I

The Blessed Birthday

A Christmas Miracle Play

What gift shall we bring to thee, O Christ, since thou as Man on earth hast shewn thyself for us, since every creature made by thee brings to thee its thanksgiving? The angels bring their song, the Heavens bring their star, the Magi bring their gifts, the shepherds bring their awe, earth gives a cave, the wilderness a manger: and we the Virgin Mother bring. God before all worlds, have mercy upon us! Amen.

First Vespers of Christmas
in the Greek Church.

The People in the Play

The Angels:

The Angel of the Annunciation
The Angel of the Nativity
The Angel of the Resurrection

The Holy Family:

Joseph
Mary
Jesus

The Children:

John the Baptist
Abner
Hezekiah
Tobias
Eli
Ruth
Miriam
Leah

THE WEDDING PARTY:

The Bride
The Bridegroom
The Parents of the Bride and Bridegroom
The Guests

THE PLACE:

Village houses, low, white, and windowless, with flat roofs, stand about a well in an open place in Nazareth. At the left is the house of the Bridegroom, with a rich eastern carpet laid down over the doorsteps, and an embroidered silk curtain hanging before the door. In the center, at the rear, is Joseph's house. The carpenter's bench can be seen within the wide doorway, and there are shavings littered about the steps. An outside stair crosses the front of the house, going up from the right of the door, to the roof. At the right is the house where Abner, Ruth, and little Eli live. The well is of stones, with a seat built out from the base and running round it. The Angel of the Annunciation, tall, and immortally young, stands at the left of Joseph's door. He wears

the livery of the Holy Ghost: the flame color of Pentecost covers him, and his wings are feathered flame. The image of a dove is embroidered on his breast, and his halo is full of rays, long and short, like the rays of a monstrance. He carries Mary's lilies in his hand. The Angel of the Nativity and the Angel of the Resurrection stand, one above the other, on the outside stairway against the wall of Joseph's house. The livery of the Incarnation clothes the Angel of the Nativity: Earth's green and heaven's blue. He holds seven stars in his hand, and the Star of Bethlehem is blazoned on his breast. His halo is three golden rings, one within another, like the rings of Saturn. His wings are streaked and burnished with the blues of the sky, the blues of night and day and twilight, the blue of the zenith and the horizon's blue. Beneath his leafy green surcoat his robe is dim and dark like the trunks of trees at dusk. The Angel of the Resurrection wears the livery of the Lamb of God. He is clothed with a white robe and he bears a palm branch in his hands. His great wings shine with a rainbow shimmer, and they are full of

eyes, like the feathers of a peacock. On his breast, set in the midst of golden rays, is the image of a white lamb. Within the circle of his halo shines the sign of the Cross. The Child Jesus sits by the well busily polishing a little wooden box, fitting its cover on and taking it off, examining the edges and corners. His white tunic, falling a little way below his knees, is embroidered around the neck and sleeves with a pattern of blue and purple and scarlet, and these are the mingled colors of his girdle. His feet are sandaled. While he is busy about his little box, the Angels chant the opening words of the Gospel according to St. John. Throughout the Miracle, when the Angels speak, they chant or sing their words. Theirs is the tongue of Holy Writ.

THE ANGELS: In the beginning was the word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him and the world knew him not.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

[*Mary appears in the doorway of Joseph's house. She has on her blue clothes, and the blue veil over her parted hair.*]

MARY: Who is singing?

THE ANGEL OF ANNUNCIATION: Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

MARY: Gabriel! I thought it was your voice. And this one with the stars is another old friend.

ANGEL OF NATIVITY: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

MARY: Yes, the night my Son was born, you were there. But your brother with the palm branch—

JESUS: [*looking up from his work*]: He is another birthday messenger.

MARY: I do not remember him.

ANGEL OF RESURRECTION: Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

MARY: A mystery?—What does he say?

JESUS [*coming from the well to his Mother*]: He says I shall have another birthday.

MARY: Oh, my little Son, many, many more! [*She puts her arms around him.*]

JESUS: I shall have a birthday at the Feast of the Passover.

MARY [*explaining*]: No, no; now is the time of the Feast of Dedication—when they built the new temple, don't you know?

JESUS [gently]: But I shall have a birthday at the Feast of the Passover.

MARY [*regarding her Son for a moment with mild perplexity, then turning to the Angel of the Annunciation*]: He has so many strange little ways. But I keep all these things in my heart.

ANGEL OF ANNUNCIATION: He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob

forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

MARY: That, too, I keep in my heart. [*She looks within the house.*] Joseph, we shall be late for the wedding.—He is getting a little deaf.—Joseph, dear! [*She comes down the doorsteps with her arm around her Son.*]

JOSEPH [*appearing at the door in his brown loose cloak and flowing white head-covering bound about with a crimson turban*]: I am ready, Mary. [*He comes out into the square, sees the little box lying on the seat by the well, and picks it up to examine it.*]

MARY [*touching his arm*]: Will you not bid the visitors welcome?

JOSEPH: Visitors? [*He looks about him.*]

MARY: The angels who have come to greet my Son on his birthday.

JOSEPH: Angels, do you say? Well, well! I have not seen an angel since Herod slew the innocents. Where?

MARY: Yonder, by our house.

JOSEPH [*peering*]: You and the child have better eyes. I shall have to take your word for it. If it were necessary, no doubt I should see them. [*He holds out his hand to Jesus, and draws the child to him.*] What is this you make? [*Showing him the box.*]

JESUS: A gift for the bride.

MARY: Poor little dumb bride! He's so sorry for her.

JOSEPH [*still examining the box*]: I never taught you to join the corners so.

JESUS: No.

JOSEPH: It is a good way.

JESUS: It is the way the corners were joined in the ark of the covenant, to make the cover fit tight.

JOSEPH: The ark of the covenant!

JESUS: That the children of Israel made for Moses, to hold the tables of the law.

JOSEPH [*with kindly irony*]: And I suppose you will be telling me next, that Moses showed you how.

JESUS [*twinkling and smiling at Joseph's little joke*]: Oh, no; I knew how before.

JOSEPH [*amused, but reproving him gently*]: Now, now! that's no way to speak of Moses.

MARY: He doesn't mean to be irreverent.

JOSEPH [*with indulgent skepticism*]: I don't know what he means, but he will be a good carpenter. Look at that box!

MARY: A carpenter! [*Hastily*]. Well, perhaps. Come, Joseph; come, dear. I should not mind being a little late if this were an ordinary wedding; but with the bride struck dumb two days ago, and her mother nearly out of her mind with grief, —come!

[*Mary and Joseph go off together by the lane opening between Joseph's house and Abner's house. Jesus sits down*

again by the well and polishes his box. The Angel of the Nativity and the Angel of the Resurrection come down to the door of Joseph's house, and the three Angels stand side by side on the doorstep and chant together certain passages from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. The Child fits the box and its cover neatly together and sets the box on the broad well-curb. He rests with his arm on the well-curb and his head on his hand, listening to the Angels.]

THE ANGELS: For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.

Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together.

Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning;

from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end—Amen.

[*Children are heard shouting and laughing. Young John the Baptist enters by the lane at the left, between the Bridegroom's house and Joseph's. He is running and is pursued by Hezekiah, Tobias, Miriam, and Leah. John's tunic is rough undyed homespun; his girdle and sandals are of leather; a lambskin hangs over one shoulder and down his back. In his hand he carries a slender staff with a crosspiece near the top, and a little basket hangs on the crosspiece. The other children wear garments of red, green, orange, brown, blue, or such colors as may be convenient.*]

HEZEKIAH [*twitching John's lambskin*]: Wild boy! Wild boy! Look at the wild boy!

LEAH: A Nazarite! See his long hair! [*She gives John's hair a tweak.*]

TOBIAS [*to Jesus, who has risen and is standing by the well*]: He says he lives with an old holy man, in the desert.

MIRIAM [*to Jesus*]: He says he's your cousin.

JESUS: Yes; my cousin John.

[*The two boys regard each other gravely, with shy awkwardness. The other children watch them curiously. Abner and Ruth and little Eli have come running out of their house, at the noise. They stand on their doorstep.*]

RUTH [*crying out suddenly*]: Oh, angels!

ABNER [*rudely*]: Call that an angel! That's a wild boy from the desert. [*He moves over to the well, to join the other children.*]

RUTH: No; I mean over there.

JOHN [*to Jesus*]: Yesterday, my mother came to see me in the wilderness where I live

with the old man, and she said this was your birthday; so I came—I came—[*he falters shyly*]—to tell you I am glad you were born.

JESUS [*shyly, lovingly, taking John's hand*]: Oh, John!—Oh, thank you, John!

JOHN [*holding out the staff with the little basket swinging from it*]: I brought you a piece of wild honeycomb,—saved from my breakfast.

TOBIAS [*snatching at the basket*]: Honey! Wild honey!

JOHN [*lifting the staff, with the basket hanging from the crosspiece, high above his head*]: Leave it be. It's not for you.

[*Tobias, Hezekiah, Abner and Leah struggle for the honey. Miriam stands a little apart, watching them. While Tobias clasps John round the middle, trying to throw him, the others leap and stretch for the basket.*]

JESUS: Don't let's fight. We'll all have a taste.

JOHN [*struggling*]: No; I brought it for you.

ABNER [*to Tobias*]: Trip him,—can't you? Here! Let me get a grip.

[*The Angel of the Nativity has come down from Joseph's doorway. He lifts his arm over the heads of the wrestling children, and takes the basket off the crosspiece of the staff.*]

MIRIAM: Look out! You've shaken off the basket. Don't step on it.

LEAH [*looking among the boy's feet*]: Where! Where!

[*The Angel of the Nativity goes back to Joseph's doorstep, the little basket hanging from his finger.*]

MIRIAM: It dropped. I saw it.

ABNER: Hezekiah, you've got it.

HEZEKIAH: I have not.

RUTH [*speaking from her doorway, where she stands holding little Eli's hand*]: It didn't drop. The angel took it off the staff. The angel with the seven stars.

THE OTHER CHILDREN EXCEPT JOHN [*frightened*]: Angels! [*They stand still, looking over their shoulders, fearfully.*]

RUTH: Over there by Joseph's house. Three of them. Eli sees them; don't you, baby?

ELI: Eli sees angels. One, two, seven, forty-leven.

TOBIAS [*to John*]: Do you see them?

JOHN: Why, yes. They've been there all along.

MIRIAM: I see—something. Yes,—I see one —very faint.

RUTH: The starry one?

MIRIAM: I see a lily. I see a dove.

ABNER: They don't see a thing. They're doing it to scare us.

HEZEKIAH [*frightened*]: I see peacock's feathers.

LEAH: What else?

HEZEKIAH: Just peacock's feathers—Oh! [*He covers his eyes.*]

RUTH: I know! They've come to the wedding. They're here to welcome the bride.

MIRIAM: Then they've made a mistake in the house. That's not the bride's house. You tell them, Ruth. You see them better than I do.

JESUS: They came because it's my birthday. They didn't make a mistake.

ABNER: Angels!—For your birthday! [*He laughs mockingly.*] Who are you? You're nobody.

[*Jesus looks at him silently.*]

RUTH [*coming from her house to join the other children*]: Shame on you, Abner! Hush!

ABNER: Nobody!—Nobody!—I bet he picked up the basket and hid it.

JOHN: Well, if he did, it's his. I brought it to him.

ABNER [*approaching Jesus*]: Where's the honey, Nobody?

JESUS [*standing quite still*]: I am—Somebody.

JOHN [*to Abner*]: You leave my cousin alone.

[*The three Angels come down Joseph's two doorsteps swiftly, their garments flying.*]

RUTH: Abner, Abner, the angels are angry!

[*Abner, startled by Ruth, backs away from Jesus involuntarily.*]

JESUS: They won't hurt you.

ABNER [*recovering himself*]: There ain't any angels. I don't see 'em.

[*The three Angels slowly move backward and stand once more on Joseph's threshold. Abner has backed toward his own house, a little way.*]

ABNER: Think you can frighten me with angels, — you — Nobody! — Born in a stable!

TOBIAS AND HEZEKIAH [*taunting*]: Born in a stable!

RUTH AND MIRIAM [*reproving*]: No, boys; don't.

LEAH: Well, it's true.

ABNER: Nobody! Nobody! You don't even know who's your father.

JESUS [*quickly*]: Oh, yes, I do.

ABNER: Who?

JESUS: I'll tell you some day.

ABNER: Who?

[*Jesus looks at him silently. Abner sees the little box on the well-curb. He runs and snatches it up.*]

ABNER: Tell me, or I'll throw this down the well.

RUTH: No, no, Abner! He made it for the bride.

[*Jesus looks at him silently.*]

ABNER: Going to tell me?—When I count three, it goes down the well.—Going to tell me?—One!

HEZEKIAH: Say, Abner, no fair!

TOBIAS: Shut up, Hezekian. Don't you mix in. Let them fight it out.

ABNER [*scornfully*]: Him fight!

[*Jesus looks silently at Abner, who mounts the seat by the well and holds the box over the well's mouth.*]

ABNER: Going to tell me?—Two!

JOHN [*passionately*]: You're a bad, bad boy. You'd better be sorry for what you're doing. If you throw that box down the well, Jesus and I will duck you, head down; won't we, Jesus?

JESUS [*tranquilly*]: But, John, that wouldn't make him sorry.

JOHN [*disconcerted, and regarding Jesus with some exasperation*]: But we're going to do something to him, aren't we?

JESUS [*his face lighting up with sudden merriment*]: Yes; something.

ABNER: Laugh at me, will you?—Think I won't do it, do you?—Once more!—Going to tell me who your father is?

JESUS: I'll tell you some day.

ABNER: Three! [*He drops the box into the well. It splashes.*]

[*There is a moment of shocked silence. The Angels look at one another and shake their heads in disapproval.*]

TOBIAS [*with a little squeal*]: He did it!

RUTH: His little box! His pretty little box that he made for the bride.—Oh!

HEZEKIAH: It wasn't fair.

MIRIAM: No; it was not.

LEAH: Lick him, Jesus! Turn the angels on him, why don't you?

ABNER: Angels! Your Grandmother! [*To Jesus:*] Why don't you say something?

—Think you can scare me? Go home, Nobody!

[*Jesus gazes silently at Abner.*]

JOHN: Jesus, Jesus! Let me fight him for you. Please!

ABNER [*to Jesus*]: Go home! We don't want to play with you. Born in a stable!

TOBIAS: Born in a——

HEZEKIAH: Shut up!

ABNER: Go home, I say!—We don't want you. [*He stoops, picks up a stone, and swings his arm up.*] Go ho— ah! [*He shrieks. The stone falls from his hand, and with it a little snake.*]

[*The children scream and start backward, all but John, who runs to the little snake and beats it with his staff. Abner, between the well and his own house, stands stupidly holding out his hand and looking at it.*]

JOHN: It's dead.

RUTH [*bending over it*]: A viper! [*She screams.*]

THE OTHER CHILDREN: A viper! [*They all gaze at Abner in horror.*]

RUTH [*crying*]: He'll die! My brother will die!

[*Leah and little Eli, who clings to Ruth, also begin to cry. The other children stand silent and horror-stricken.*]

JESUS [*going up to Abner*]: Don't be frightened, Abner. Don't be frightened, dear Abner.

[*Abner stands rigid, looking at his outstretched hand. Jesus takes the hand in his, bends his head down, and gently, slowly, kisses the open palm. Then he closes the fingers over the palm, bends the arm at the elbow, and lays the closed hand against Abner's breast.*]

LITTLE ELI [*who stopped crying when Jesus spoke to Abner*]: Jesus kissed the place and made it all well.

[*The children sigh. Abner, still dazed, opens his hand and looks at it. Then he looks at Jesus gravely. While Abner and Jesus are looking into each other's eyes, the Angels chant these words from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.*]

THE ANGELS: I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.

For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.

ABNER [*suddenly bursting into tears and hiding his face in his arm*]: I can't bear it! I can't bear it! I threw his little box down the well.—I called him names.—I can't bear it! [*Still with his arm before his eyes, he turns and runs blindly away from the children and stumbles up against*

the Angel of the Resurrection. He clutches the Angel and sobs, burying his face in the white robe. The Angel of the Resurrection pats him and smooths his hair.]

MIRIAM: He might have died!—People do.

JOHN: I'm glad he's sorry at last.

JESUS [*softly*]: He didn't know what he was doing. Don't let's talk about it any more. Let's eat the honey.

JOHN: Yes, let's.

JESUS [*looking at little Eli and smiling*]: Where's the honey, baby?

ELI: Eli knows.

JESUS: Will you go find it for Jesus?

[*Eli runs to the door of Joseph's house, and stops before the Angel of the Nativity. Eli puts his finger in his mouth shyly.*]

TOBIAS: There are Angels!—I see them!

LEAH: So do I!

MIRIAM: Three!—and such beauties!

[*The Angel of the Nativity stoops and gives the little basket to Eli.*]

RUTH: Make your bow, baby.

[*Eli takes his finger out of his mouth, pulls the curl that hangs over his forehead, and bobs his little head. The Angels smile. Eli comes back to Jesus and gives him the honey basket. The children gather close around Jesus.*]

HEZEKIAH: There isn't much. Do you think it'll go round?

JESUS: Oh, yes!

RUTH: Jesus knows how to make things go round. I've noticed that whenever he goes shares there's always enough for everybody.

MIRIAM: So have I. Umm! Good honey!

LEAH: Don't give me so much, Jesus.

JOHN: You needn't count me in. I can have it any time.

JESUS: But there's plenty, John.

TOBIAS: Have you got some left for yourself?

JESUS: Abner, here's your piece.

LEAH: After he's been so mean!

JESUS: We can't begin to eat till you come, Abner; won't you come?

[*Abner lifts his face from the folds of the Angel's robe. The Angel wipes away his tears. Reluctantly, shamefacedly, Abner comes back to the children. Jesus gives him a piece of the honeycomb. They look at each other shyly. Their hands move to their mouths in embarrassed silence. They bite the honeycomb simultaneously, and simultaneously they smile at each other. The other children all laugh. And the Angels chant certain verses from the Nineteenth Psalm.*]

THE ANGELS: The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

RUTH: Listen! The Angels! Do you hear them?

ANGEL OF NATIVITY: Glory to God in the highest!

Glory to God in the highest!

ANGEL OF ANNUNCIATION: And on earth peace!

Glory to God in the highest!

ANGEL OF RESURRECTION: And on earth peace,

Good will toward men!
Glory to God in the highest!

THE THREE ANGELS: Glory to God in the highest!
And on earth peace,
Goodwill toward men!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

MIRIAM: What song is that?

JESUS: My birthday song. The angels sang it the night that I was born.

LEAH: But it's not true that you were born in a stable.

JESUS: Oh, yes; it's true.

[*The children have been standing in a little group in front of the well, eating their honey. They look at one another, abashed.*]

MIRIAM: Do you remember it?

JESUS: Yes; quite well.

LEAH: How did it feel to lie in hay, in a manger?

JESUS [*merrily*]: It tickled.

[*The children laugh.*]

HEZEKIAH: My mother told me there were shepherds saw you in that stable.

ANGEL OF NATIVITY [*coming down Joseph's steps, lifting his hand to command attention, and singing in a loud voice*]: Behold, I bring you good tidings!

RUTH: He's going to tell us something. He wants us to be still.

[*Ruth, Miriam, and little Eli sit down on the steps of the Bridegroom's house, on the bright carpet. Tobias, Hezekiah, and Leah scamper up the outside staircase of Joseph's house and sit about halfway up, Hezekiah and Tobias side by side on one stair, and Leah two stairs above them. John the Baptist is kneeling on the well-seat with his elbows on the well-curb and his chin in his hands, looking across the well at the angels. Abner leans against the wall of his house and Jesus goes and leans*

beside him, against the house. Presently Abner links arms with Jesus.]

ANGEL OF NATIVITY [*chanting certain portions of the Gospel according to St. Luke*]: It came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

ANGEL OF ANNUNCIATION [*moving down one step and taking up the tale*]: And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them:

ANGEL OF NATIVITY [*in his clear triumphant voice*]: Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

ANGEL OF ANNUNCIATION: And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,—

THE THREE ANGELS: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

ANGEL OF ANNUNCIATION: And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another,—

THE THREE ANGELS: Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

ANGEL OF ANNUNCIATION: And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and

praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

MIRIAM: Oh, what a darling story! Isn't there more?

HEZEKIAH AND LEAH: More! More!

TOBIAS: What about those kings? My father said there was a story about kings, but he didn't believe it. Neither did I. Was it true?

JOHN THE BAPTIST: True! Of course it was true! There were three of them.

HEZEKIAH [*to the Angels*]: Oh, do tell us about the kings.

ANGEL OF ANNUNCIATION [*chanting certain portions of the Gospel according to St. Matthew*]: Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying,—

ANGEL OF NATIVITY: Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his

star in the east and are come to worship him.

ANGEL OF ANNUNCIATION: When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him,—

ANGEL OF RESURRECTION [*moving down to stand beside the Angel of the Annunciation*]: In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet,

And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

ANGEL OF ANNUNCIATION: Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said,—

ANGEL OF NATIVITY: Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

ANGEL OF ANNUNCIATION: When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

ANGEL OF NATIVITY: When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

THE THREE ANGELS: And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

HEZEKIAH [*jumping up, and running down the stairway*]: Jesus is our king! Jesus is our king!

RUTH AND MIRIAM [*running to Jesus and taking his hands*]: Come, Jesus! Come and be king!

TOBIAS AND LEAH [*hurrying to join the other children*]: Come sit by the well, Jesus! Play it's your throne!

[*The Angels and John the Baptist go to the door of the Bridegroom's house, and take up the carpet by the four corners, and spread the carpet over the seat by the well. The children pull and push Jesus to the well and make him sit down. The Angel of the Resurrection goes to the well, behind Jesus, on the other side of the well-mouth, and mounts to the well-curb. Standing upright on top of the broad well-curb, with his great wings spread wide, he is the back of the throne. The Angel of the Annunciation stands on the curving well-seat at the left of Jesus, and the Angel of the Nativity stands on his right. So these two, standing upright, but a little below the Angel of the*

Resurrection, and with their wings spread wide, are the arms of the throne. And the three take hands. Between and beneath them, as under a canopy of cherubim and glory, sits the child Jesus, smiling at his playmates. The children stand before Jesus, at the right and the left of the throne. Abner, John the Baptist, Ruth, and little Eli are on the left hand. Leah, Miriam, Tobias, and Hezekiah are on the right.]

JOHN: We ought to have a crown.

RUTH: We can make believe he has many crowns on his head.

MIRIAM: We can make believe a scepter.

TOBIAS: Jesus, when we're grown up we'll give you a crown, and a scepter in your hand, and we'll put a purple robe on you.

[*The three Angels bend their heads and hide their faces in their hands. Jesus gazes straight ahead, gravely, as if he saw something sad a long way off.*]

HEZEKIAH [*shouting, and lifting up his arms*]: Hail, King of the Jews!

RUTH [*lifting up her arms*]: Hail, Everybody's King!

THE CHILDREN [*standing with uplifted arms*]: Hail!—Hail!—Hail!

[*When the children cry Hail! the Angels lift up on high the palm branch, the lilies, and the seven stars. Little Eli runs to Jesus, scrambles up on the seat beside him, puts his arms around Jesus's neck and kisses him. And Jesus hugs little Eli. In the distance trumpets are heard.*]

ABNER [*crying out in anguish*]: The wedding! Oh, can't we get the little box out of the well? Can't we?

JESUS: Don't cry, Abner. I'll give the Bride something else.

[*Jesus gets up from his throne; all the other children, except Abner, have run to look down the lane between Joseph's house and Abner's. The Angels de-*

scend from the well and carry the Bride's carpet back to the Bridegroom's house. They spread the carpet tidily before the door and over the steps. The trumpets are heard again, nearer. Jesus and Abner are left by the well. Abner kneels on the well-seat, looking over the curb, down the well.]

ABNER: I want her to have the little box. I shall always want her to have the little box.

JESUS [*putting his arm over Abner's shoulder*]: I'm sorry, Abner.

ABNER [*turning and flinging his arms around Jesus*]: Oh, Jesus, why did I do it? Why did I?

JESUS: Abner, I love you; and you love me. We're friends.

ABNER [*lifting his head and smiling*]: Yes; we're friends.

[*The trumpets sound close by. The Angels have gone up the outside stairway of*

Joseph's house and stand one above another, on the stairs; the Angel of the Resurrection at the top, and the Angel of the Nativity and the Angel of the Annunciation in order below him.]

LEAH: Hurry, Jesus! Abner, here they come!

MIRIAM: See the Bride! How sad she looks! Only three days ago she could speak, like us. And now she's dumb.

TOBIAS: And the Bridegroom is sad, look! He didn't have to marry her when she lost her tongue. But he stuck to his bargain. My father says he's a good fellow.

HEZEKIAH: It's too bad Jesus can't give her the little box. I hope my bride won't go dumb when I get married.

RUTH: Hush—ssh! They'll hear you!

[*The Bride and Bridegroom, their parents, Mary, Joseph, and other wedding guests, some with trumpets and cymbals, come into the little square by the lane between Joseph's house and the house*

of Abner. They wear the wedding garments of the East. The faces of the Bride and Bridegroom are sad. As he leads her past Joseph's house she looks up and sees the Angels on the stairs. She stands still, pulls the Bridegroom's sleeve, points up at the Angels. The wedding procession halts behind her.]

BRIDEGROOM [*trying to lead her on*]: Not this house, the next is ours.

[*The Bride falls on her knees and lifts up her hands to the Angels. They lift their hands and point to Jesus.*]

BRIDE'S MOTHER: My daughter, my daughter! What new affliction is this? Come home to your husband's house.

RUTH: She sees the Angels.

THE PEOPLE [*looking up and gaping*]: Angels! Where? Where?

BRIDEGROOM'S FATHER: Nonsense! Come, my son, we must get her into the house.

[*The Bridegroom and his Father lift up the Bride and support her between them to the threshold of the Bridegroom's house. She looks at them beseechingly and moves her lips but without a sound. Jesus has joined his Mother, and they have come from the rear of the procession, circling the front of the well, and are standing at the Bridegroom's threshold when the Bride is brought there.*]

BRIDEGROOM: Speak to her, Mary. She is frightened. Welcome her; comfort her. You know how to comfort.

MARY: Do not tremble so, little dove. Welcome to Nazareth! Welcome, dear neighbor! See, this is my little Son. He has a gift for you.

[*The Bride looks at Jesus and her face becomes quiet. After a moment she puts out her hands and draws him to her. He lifts his face, standing on tiptoe, and she bends hers. They kiss. The Bride looks up from the kiss, startled. Joy*

and amazement light her face. She opens her mouth and bursts into singing. Jesus stands, gazing up at her, and smiling happily. The people are transfixed in amazement.]

THE BRIDE [*singing portions of the One Hundred and Third Psalm*]: Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies;

Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in

strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto his word.

Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul.

THE PEOPLE [*crying out in astonishment*]: A miracle! A miracle!

THE ANGEL OF THE RESURRECTION [*standing at the top of the stairway, he chants from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*]: Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

I have seen his ways, and I will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.

I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him.

THE CHILDREN [*suddenly bursting out into the Birthday Song*]: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

THE ANGELS [*singing with the children*]:
Glory to God in the highest!
Glory to God in the highest!
And on earth peace!

THE PEOPLE [*singing with the Children and the Angels*]:
And on earth peace!
And on earth peace!
Good will toward men!
Good will! Good will!
Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace,
Good will toward men!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

II

Thy Kingdom Come

A Dream for Easter Even

Who shall despair, though round us be
confusion;
Though not for us the perfect order
dawn?
The Day-Star is seen, the darkness is
departing!
O come, Son of Mary,
Jesu, our Redeemer,
O come, King triumphant, and reign on
earth!

Selwyn Image.

The Place

The Tomb of the Saviour in a Garden

The Time

The First Easter Even; the Soldier's Vigil

The People

The Three Soldiers who guard the Tomb:

The Soldier who plaited the Crown of Thorns
The Soldier who pierced the Side of Jesus
The Soldier who won the Seamless Coat

The Galilean Children:

The little Daughter of Jairus
The Boy who was an Epileptic
The Lad who once had five Barley Loaves and two Fishes
A Child whom Jesus blessed

THE ANGELS:

The Angels who roll the Stone away

THE DREAMS:

The Child with the Crown of Thorns
The Child with the Lance
The Child with the Seamless Coat
The Child with the Cross

It is chilly dusk and the soldiers have kindled a fire in a brazier before the tomb, and stuck a tall torch upright in the earth between the tomb and a long stone bench. The spring flowers of the garden twinkle and flush within the torch-light's wavering circle, and a flowering almond tree glows softly above the stone bench. One of the soldiers has stretched himself along the bench beneath the rosy tree, with feet crossed and arms clasped under his head. His helmet is on the ground within reach of his hand. Another soldier crouches beside the brazier, feeding the fire and shivering. The third paces uneasily to and fro before the sepulchre, from the young cedar at one side of the tomb to the torch at the other, from shadow into light, and back again. The three soldiers wear the Roman insignia. The reclining soldier is the one who pierced the side of Jesus. The chilly soldier is

the one who won the Seamless Coat. The restless soldier is the one who plaited the Crown of Thorns.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*pausing before the tomb and looking up at it darkly*]: So here's the end of Him and His Kingdom?

[*He strikes the rock savagely with his bare hand, winces, and sucks the injured hand.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*glancing sidewise out of the corner of his eye*]: Hurt yourself?

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: A thorn.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Funny place to pick up a thorn.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: I run it in yesterday, when I was playin' smarty.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*indifferently*]: Playin' smarty?

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*sulkily*]: Plaitin' a crown o' thorns.

THE SOLDIER OF THE SEAMLESS COAT [*looking round over his shoulder, but still warming his hands at the fire*]: You was that joker, was you?

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*ignoring the question and examining his hand by the light of the fire*]: If I'd known the things could hurt so much——

[*There is a thoughtful silence.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*turning back to the fire*]: Better have it looked at. Sometimes them things swell.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*still indifferent*]: Maybe He put a curse on your hand. I would.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: You—yes!—Not Him.—He never cursed a curse all day, from the time we took Him.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*staring into the fire and shivering*]: Father, forgive them——

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*violently*]: Aw cut it out! [*He begins to pace up and down again.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*yawning and stretching on the bench*]: Who takes first watch? Don't everybody speak at once!

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: I'd just as lief. I'm too cold to sleep, and anyway—I'd like to be awake if He—if He should——

[*He glances again over his shoulder, fearfully, at the tomb.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*grimly*]: Did you ever stick a spear into a dead man?

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*defiantly*]: What's that got to do with it?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: You'd know He was dead—that's all.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*pausing beside the bench*]: Let's have a look at the spear.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Left it home.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: We was told to come armed.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Well, what's a sword? [*He draws his short sword half out of its scabbard and thrusts it back again.*] I've done all I want to with spears—for one while.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*speaking hesitantly across the brazier*]: You don't think—even if He was dead—He'd——?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Well, do you? [*There is another silence, doubtful, inconclusive.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*again resuming his restless march*]: That old blighter, Caiaphas, ain't afraid of the dead. It's the livin' he's out after.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: Them fishermen?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: The trouble with the High Priest is, he thinks everybody else is as foxy as he is. But I'm not going to lose my sleep waiting for Simon

and the sons of Zebedee to hatch a plot to rob a tomb. I'd develop insomnia permanent, if I did. [*He closes his eyes.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: There's Joseph of Arimathea?—Or Nicodemus—what?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [still with his *eyes closed*]: Too respectable. Besides, they want to be convinced, themselves. And you don't convince yourself a man's risen from the dead by swiping his corpse; now, do you?

[*He opens his eyes and looks up at the Soldier of the Thorns, who has paused by the bench. They stare at each other silently a moment, and the Soldier of the Thorns takes up his march again.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*shuddering*]: I'll be glad when the night's safe over.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*indifferently*]: Same here. Say, if you're cold, sittin' in the fire, what do you think I am, layin' out on this frosty bench? Where's your prophet's mantle you won so slick yester-

day afternoon? If you're not goin' to use it, you might tuck it round me and kiss me good-night.

[*The Soldier of the Thorns laughs.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: Our baby was asleep in it when I left home. He's been sick for two days, and I ain't had a wink o' sleep. My wife thinks he—he—knew the coat. He snuggled right down and dropped off, quiet as you please.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*moodily*]: He blessed my kids, too. Great one for kids, He was.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*musing with his eyes shut*]: Kids are all right in their place. I'm as fond of a good kid as anybody. But a whole Kingdom come, of nothin' but kids——

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*with a laugh*]: Well, you don't need to worry. It's all off.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*tentatively*]: You think there won't nothin' come of it?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*contemptuously*]: He's dead, ain't he?

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*hesitating*]: But we're not.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*truculent*]: What do you mean?—We're not?

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*troubled*]: Well, we're not; are we?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*turning his head sidewise on the bench and regarding the Soldier of the Seamless Coat quizzically*]: Feel sorter responsible, now his mantle's descended on you, do you? [*He turns his face once more to the sky and shuts his eyes.*] You poor fish!

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*pondering*]: They say He said the Kingdom's inside of us.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: Rome, for mine! There's something you can take hold on.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*puzzled*]: But He never talked against Rome.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*intoning, his eyes closed*]: No man can serve two masters.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*piteously*]: But I can't find no Kingdom inside of me to serve.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*pausing beside the brazier and looking down good-naturedly at his comrade*]: Nothin' but guts, heh? Well, guts ain't so worse.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: You think He's not goin' to rise from the dead?

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*noncommittal*]: 'Tain't mornin' yet. What do you say, Longinus?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*after a pause, always with eyes shut and face turned up*

to the sky]: I say—there won't be any Kingdom come unless He does rise from the dead.

[*The Soldier of the Thorns returns to his beat, back and forth before the tomb.*]

THE VOICE OF A CHILD [*heard from a distance*]: Not that way! This way!

THE VOICE OF ANOTHER CHILD [*also heard from a distance*]: Yes, yes! This way! I see a light!

A THIRD CHILD'S VOICE: Wait for me! Wait for me! Don't run so fast!

A FOURTH CHILD'S VOICE: Take my hand! Upsy-daisy! Did you hurt yourself?

THE THIRD CHILD'S VOICE: Just my toe—stubbed.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*peering through the dusk beyond the cedar tree, and laughing*]: Here's your robber band!

[*The Galilean Children come into the firelight from round the cedar tree. They carry palms and spring flowers in their*

arms. The little Daughter of Jairus and a little Girl whom Jesus blessed are hand-in-hand. The four children stand abashed and shy when they see the Soldiers.]

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*Sitting up on the bench and putting his feet to the ground*]: Hullo! Kinder late for little folks, isn't it?

THE LAD OF THE LOAVES [*with dignity*]: I'm older than I look.

[*The Soldiers laugh goodnaturedly.*]

THE BOY WHO WAS EPILEPTIC: Father said I might. Since the Master cured me, I don't have to wait for grown people to take me places. Our inn isn't far.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*eagerly*]: Cured you, did He? What of?

THE EPILEPTIC BOY [*awkwardly*]: I used to fall down, just anywhere. Once I fell in the fire; and—and—I was 'most drownded once—and—and—I don't know——

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*nodding sagely to his comrades*]: Fits.

[*They all nod, and stare stolidly at the boy.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*holding out his hand to Jairus's Daughter*]: Come over here and sit by me, Missy, and tell me where you live when you're at home. You know [*solemnly*], us soldiers have to guard this tomb, and we can't let suspicious-looking characters come around.

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER [*going over to the bench and laying her hand in the soldier's*]: I'm not a suspicious-looking character. My father is one of the rulers of the Synagogue in Capernaum.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*holding out his other hand to the little girl who has followed Jairus's Daughter*]: Galileans?

[*Jairus's Daughter sits beside him on the bench. The younger child allows him to lift her on his knee.*]

THE LAD OF THE LOAVES: We came up for the Passover; my family, and his, and hers, and hers. We're staying at the inn. Everybody said this Passover would be different from all the other Passovers. They said the Master would come into his Kingdom.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*quietly stroking the child's hair*]: And what do they say now?

THE LAD OF THE LOAVES [*passionately*]: I don't care what they say.

[*He goes to the tomb and lays his palm and his flowers before the rock-bound door. Then, standing upright with face uplifted toward the tomb, and arms stretched upward, he says gently.*]

Master, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

[*He steps back to the fire.*]

THE EPILEPTIC BOY [*laying his palm and his flowers before the tomb, and standing with uplifted face and hands*]: Master,

remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

[*He moves to one side and stands beside the torch.*]

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER [*slipping off the bench, crossing to the tomb, laying her palm and her flowers beside the offerings of the other two, and standing with uplifted face and hands*]: Master, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

[*She returns to the bench.*]

THE CHILD [*who has been watching her playfellows, speaking now to the Soldier of the Lance, on whose knee she sits*]: I want to put mine up there, on top. Will you lift me up?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Sure I will!

[*He carries the child to the tomb, sets her on his shoulder, and stands still while she puts her palm and her flowers on top of the tomb.*]

THE CHILD [*sitting on the Soldier's shoulder and lifting up her face and her hands*]:

Master, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

[*The Soldier of the Lance carries the child back to the bench and sits down, taking her again on his knee.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*gruffly*]: But He's dead, you know, so how——

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*interrupting angrily*]: Shut your mouth, you!

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*turning sullen*] Shut your mouth yourself! Wasn't it you said He was dead, in the first place?

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER [*quietly*]: The Master raised me from the dead.

[*There is a startled silence. The three soldiers stare, speechless, at Jairus's Daughter. The Soldier of the Lance edges away from her slowly, along the bench. The Soldier of the Seamless Coat, squatting by the brazier, rises to his knees and clasps his hands. The Soldier of the Thorns, standing by the*

torch, throws out his hands in a gesture of terror, as if to keep her off.]

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Who told you that, Missy?

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER: He called me.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: He?

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER: The Master.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: Called you?

[*He glances fearfully over his shoulder at the tomb*].

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER: He said, "Maid, arise." And I heard Him, and came back again, and got up off the bed. And He told them to give me something to eat.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*always quietly*]: How does it feel to be dead?

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER [*simply*]: I don't know how to tell it. I came back a long way.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*on his knees by the brazier, flinging out his hands in a*

gesture of entreaty, his voice trembling with eagerness]: What do you say to that, Longinus?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*clasping both arms round the child, and speaking moodily*]: I say, there came out water and blood from the wound. What else can I say?

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: The man at Bethany was four days in his grave.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*reluctantly*]: And somebody told me there was a widow's son at Nain——

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*brooding, with his arms clasped tight round the child*]: He saved others——

THE CHILD [*on his knee*]: Are you afraid He won't wake up in time to-morrow morning?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Well, you see, ducky, He waked little sister here—maybe

—but who'll wake Him? My voice don't carry very far.

THE CHILD: Oh, He'll wake Himself. Just as I do when I say, "To-morrow morning I'll wake up at six." And then I do wake up at six.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: That's so!

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: And are you kids going to stay here the rest of the night?

THE LAD OF THE LOAVES: No; I had to promise we'd come back in half an hour, or they wouldn't have let us come.

THE EPILEPTIC BOY: My father's discouraged. We're starting home at dawn.

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER: So is my father. He seems to think the Cross was the end of it all, when it's only the beginning.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: The beginning of what, Missy?

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER: Of the Kingdom.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*bitterly*]: A fine Kingdom—a dead man on a gibbet.

THE OTHER TWO SOLDIERS [*speaking together, hastily*]: Sshsh-h, —— you!

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER [*tranquilly*]: The Master said, only this week, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." And then He was lifted up on the Cross.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*quizzing her gently*]: And now—where's He going to lift the rest of us up to—more crosses?

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER [*always serene*]: But I'd so much rather be on a cross with the Master than on a throne with Herod.

THE LAD OF THE LOAVES: Or on the Judgment Seat with Pilate.

THE EPILEPTIC BOY: Or in the Holy of Holies with Caiaphas.

THE CHILD [*turning on the Soldier's knee and looking up into his face*]: Wouldn't you?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*laughing ruefully*]: Well, ducky darlin', if you put it that way,—I s'pose I would.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*gazing at his injured hand*]: If one little thorn in your hand can hurt so bad, what must it be like—?—still——

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*wringing his hands in anguish*]: I drove the nails! I drove the nails! Ah, but the Cross would be a soft bed—a soft bed indeed, for me! I'm thinkin' I'll never rest quiet till I'm laid on it.

[*The children are gazing in round-eyed compassion at the Soldier of the Seamless Coat.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*to the Soldier of the Seamless Coat, roughly*]: Quit your whining, you! Do you want to scare the kids?—[*To the Lad of the Loaves*].—Tell us about this yere Kingdom of yours, youngster. Nobody over fourteen allowed inside, what? Infants admitted

free?—Say, couldn't you squeeze me through the gate if I stooped down and crawled in? [*This to the child on his knee.*]—Or I could sit in the baby's go-cart and you could push me.

THE CHILD: Wouldn't that be funny—you in a go-cart! The Master would surely laugh. But he didn't say you had to be children.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Didn't He, now?

THE CHILD: No; He said—[*she pauses as if recalling something*]—He said, "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." He said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God." Don't you see?—as a little child.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Just what I said—in a go-cart; and you wheeling me!

THE CHILD [*laughing, but doubtful*]: But I couldn't wheel you if you were too grown-up.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: But if I promise not to grow up any more?

THE CHILD [*smiling, with her head on one side*]: Perhaps——

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: And then, when we got inside—then what?

THE LAD OF THE LOAVES: Then you'd never be hungry any more. Nobody's ever hungry.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: That's good hearing. How would you manage it?

THE LAD OF THE LOAVES: The Master would show us how. You ought to have seen Him do it—that day we were outside Bethsaida—such a crowd! My father gave me a basket of barley bread, five loaves, and a couple of fishes,—little fellows they were. "You may be able to sell them," my father said. "Some of

these guys are sure to go off without their lunch." And there wasn't anybody had anything to eat there that day—anybody but me; they didn't know it was going to be an all-day affair, I guess. And the Master looked up to heaven and blessed the bread and the fishes, and divided it up, and everybody had some and ate all they wanted.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: How many was there?

THE LAD OF THE LOAVES: Five thousand.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*eagerly*]: I heard about that!

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*to the Lad*]: Did you eat some?

THE LAD OF THE LOAVES: I ate some that was left. There was twelve baskets of bread and fish, scraps, left over.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: Oh, say, kid, you dreamed it!

THE LAD OF THE LOAVES: I was there.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: Yes; I heard about them twelve baskets.

[*For a few moments there is silence.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*rousing from his reverie*]: Well, so that's the first thing: no more hungry folks in your Kingdom, eh?

THE LAD OF THE LOAVES: In the Master's Kingdom.

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER: But it takes more than fishes and barley bread to keep you from being hungry. In the Master's Kingdom we shall have the Bread of God, "which cometh down from Heaven and giveth life unto the world."

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: Who said that?

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER: The Master.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: What is that Bread of God?

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER: The Master.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: What does the kid mean, Longinus?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Why should I know? Am I a rabbi?

THE CHILD [*looking up earnestly, reproachfully, into his face*]: Oh, but you do know!

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*kissing her*]: Kiddie; you're a mind-reader. [*Turning to the Epileptic Boy*] Well? Bread enough and to spare—barley bread and Bread of Heaven—and then what?

THE EPILEPTIC BOY: No sick boys, like I used to be.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: Not a bad idea, what! Rosy cheeks; no snuffles; everybody in bloomin' health. Say, you kids have got the notion all right.

THE EPILEPTIC BOY: Oh, but it's not our notion, you know. It's the Master's.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*glancing at the tomb*]: No Kingdom without the Master?

THE EPILEPTIC BOY: How could there be?

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*his eyes on the tomb*]: But He's d——

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*interrupting hastily*]: Nobody hungry; nobody sick. Now, ducky, your turn——

THE CHILD: I know a story about the Kingdom. Shall I tell it?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Do!

THE CHILD: It's one of the Master's stories. I can't tell it as good as He could.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Never mind. We'll make allowance. Tune up, sweetie.

THE CHILD: Well—Once upon a time—the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man that got up early one morning and went down town to hire some laborers to work in his vineyard.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: So there'll be work in the Kingdom?

THE LAD OF THE LOAVES: Sure! Enough for all. Bread and work.

THE CHILD [*shaking her finger mildly at the lad*]: You mustn't interrupt; else may be I'll forget what came next. And the man said he'd pay them a penny a day. And they said, "That suits us, boss." And I believe that was about six o'clock in the morning. And about nine o'clock he went out to see if he couldn't get some more help. And there were still lots of men hanging round the market-place——

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: Sure! I've seen 'em.

THE CHILD: And he hired some more, and said he'd give them what was right. And they said——

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: "We're with you boss."

THE CHILD: Yes; I guess that's what they said. Only you mustn't interrupt. And at noon and at three o'clock there was still

such a lot of work to be done in the vineyard that he hired some more, and some more.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: In luck, wasn't they?

THE CHILD [*sternly*]: You mustn't interrupt. And at five o'clock, just an hour before closing time, he said, "See here, if I'm going to finish this job to-day, I've got to hustle——"

[*The Soldiers laugh delightedly.*]

THE CHILD: And so he went to the market-place one more last time, and he said to the men that were there, "What are you fellows loafin' round here all day for, doin' nothin'?" And they said, "Because we can't find a job."

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*to the Soldier of the Lance*]: Smart kid, what?

THE CHILD [*ignoring him*]: And so he said, "Well, you go to my vineyard, too, and you'll get what's right."

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: And they said——

THE CHILD [*regarding him with gentle disapproval*]: They didn't say anything. They just went.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*laughing*]: The workin' men I know ain't so trustin'.

THE CHILD: Oh, but wait till you hear. This is the best part of the story. Because in the evening, the man said to his foreman: "Call the men and pay them; and pay the ones that were hired last, first." And every man that was hired at five o'clock in the afternoon got a penny. Now, what do you think of that?

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: That sure was white of the boss, wasn't it?

THE CHILD: And then, of course, the ones that had been working since six in the morning thought they were going to get more. But they didn't. Just the penny they said they'd work for. That's all they got. And so then they made a fuss

and said it wasn't fair, because they had worked all day, and the others only an hour. But the man said—let me see if I can remember the words.—The man—said—"Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee."

[*There is a pause, during which the three Soldiers glance at each other amusedly, and wink, over the child's head.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: You're sure you got the last part of the story straight, kiddie?

THE CHILD [*astonished*]: Yes!

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER: Yes; she got it straight.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: And you think it was fair?

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER: For everybody to have as much as he needs to live on? Why, yes! Don't you?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Whether they work for it or not?

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER: Oh, but they did work for it, as long as they were given a chance to work. There they stood in the market-place, ready to be hired. Could they help it if nobody hired them till five o'clock?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*smiling*]: It's a new idea in business, that's all.

THE CHILD: Why is it new?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Say, ducky, ask me another.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: Just the same, it's a fine story, little darlin'; and you told it fine. If it ain't true, it ought to be.

THE CHILD: But it is true—once upon a time, in the Kingdom.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*to Jairus's Daughter*]: And now you, little Missy; what else is true in the Kingdom, once upon a time?

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER [*with her tranquil smile*]: Everybody'll be alive, in the Kingdom.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: Alive!—What's the matter with us?

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER: Oh, I don't mean just breathing and eating and walking and talking. I mean, really alive—like the Master.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: The Master!

[*He turns from the fire, on his knees, and gazes at the tomb with praying hands.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: The Master! But He's——

[*He pauses, his eyes fixed on the tomb.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*gently, looking over his shoulder at the tomb*]: And if the Master—isn't——

[*A voice in the distance, calling.*]

VOICE: Children!—Children!

THE CHILD: Mother's calling. We must go.

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER [*to the Soldier of the Lance*]: And if the Master isn't what?

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Nothing. No matter.—So you don't think I'm alive, Missy?

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER [*rising to go, and regarding him thoughtfully*]: Coming alive.

VOICE: Children!—Bedtime!

THE LAD OF THE LOAVES: Coming!—Coming!

THE EPILEPTIC BOY [*pausing before the door of the tomb*]: Thy Kingdom come!

THE LAD OF THE LOAVES [*pausing before the door of the tomb*]: Thy will be done!

JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER [*pausing before the door of the tomb*]: On earth as it is in heaven!

[*The three move away from the door, looking back lingeringly at the tomb, as they disappear one by one beyond the cedar*].

THE CHILD [*slipping off the knee of the Soldier of the Lance, running to the tomb, and laying her cheek against the rocky door*]: Hosanna! Blessèd is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessèd be the Kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest!

[*She runs out after the others, beyond the cedar.*]

VOICE: Children!

CHILDREN [*from a distance*]: Coming!

[*The Soldier of the Seamless Coat puts more twigs on the fire. The Soldier of the Thorns begins his slow, steady beat, up and down before the tomb. The Soldier of the Lance stretches out once more on the bench. There is a brief silence.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*looking over his shoulder at the Soldier of the Thorns*]: How's a fellow to get his forty

winks, with you clankin' up an' down, clankin' up and down——?

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: Nerves. That's what's the matter with you.

[*He slumps down with his back against the cedar and his legs sprawled out on the ground before him.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: I don't believe the little kid got twisted in her story. I believe He told it that way. It would be like Him.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: I don't know what I believe.

[*He yawns, and presently his head drops forward on his chest—and he sleeps.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*stretching out on the ground by the brazier*]: I, if I be lifted up—lifted up. A soft bed—Cross. Never rest quiet—never rest quiet—till I'm laid on it. [*He sleeps, murmuring*] Never rest quiet—cold. Rest on the Cross. [*In his sleep he turns*

on his back and flings his arms out on the ground in the shape of a cross.] I—if I be lifted up—lifted up—all men unto me.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*wincing in his sleep*]: If I'd known that one little thorn could—Father, they know not what they do—Father, forgive them.

[*There is silence for a brief space.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*lying on the bench with face upturned to the stars and eyes closed*]: Coming alive!—Coming!—Coming alive!

Silence. The Soldiers sleep. From behind the flowering almond tree their dreams come drifting in. The Soldiers are dreaming of children.

The Soldier of the Thorns dreams of a child with shadowy hair and clad in a dim, filmy purple gown. She bears a purple cushion in her two hands. There is a crown of thorns on the cushion. Noiselessly the child passes

before the Soldier and kneels beside him, her shoulder against his. Their two faces are turned the one way, side by side. His eyes are shut, for he is asleep; but the eyes of his Dream are set wide open, gazing upon the crown of thorns out-held upon the purple cushion.

The Dream of the Soldier of the Lance slips round the almond tree and sits at his head, on the bench. She has a tall spear. She is a little gray dream, but there are silver gleams within her gray veils, and the veil over her hair is bound with a silver circlet. She sits with little gray feet dangling from the bench, steadying herself with clasped hands against the upright spear. Her small face looks straight forward, wide-eyed.

The Soldier of the Seamless Coat dreams of a child with pale, flying hair, and a dim, blue transparent gown. In her right hand she holds three great iron nails. Over her left arm hangs, fold on floating fold, a dim blue cloak. The child kneels above her prostrate Soldier and holds the three nails over his face. The cloak, thin as a shadow, trails, a dark pool

on the ground about her knees. Her eyes are on the three nails.

Yet another Dream comes presently from behind the almond tree and stands beside the brazier. The three soldiers sigh. The fourth Dream is a russet-brown child, translucent in the firelight. This little Dream carries a cross.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*in the monotone of one who talks in his sleep*]: Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the palace and gathered unto him the whole band, and they stripped him and put on him a scarlet robe. And they plaited a crown of thorns [*the voice falters*], a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand, and they kneeled down before him and mocked him saying, Hail, King of the Jews [*the voice falters*]. And they spat upon him and took the reed and smote him on the head.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*crying out*]: When they had mocked him, they took off

from him the robe and put on him his garments and led him away to crucify him. And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments among them [*the voice falters*] casting lots. And they sat and watched him there.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*in a thoughtful monotone*]: Jesus said, Father forgive them for they know not what they do.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*in his level voice*]: The soldiers led him away within the court which is the Prætorium and they call together the whole band. And they clothe him in purple, and plaiting a crown of thorns [*the voice falters*], they put it on him and they began to salute him, Hail King of the Jews. And they smote his head with a reed and did spit upon him and bowing their knees worshiped him.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*in his musing voice*]: He said unto him, Verily I say unto thee to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*in a clear, high voice*]: When they had mocked him, they took off from him the purple and put on him his garments. And they lead him out to crucify him. And they crucify him [*the voice falters*], and part his garments among them casting lots upon them [*the voice falters*], what each should take. And it was the third hour.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*gently*]: He saith unto his Mother, Woman behold thy son.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*in anguish*]: Casting lots upon them!

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*gently*]: Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy Mother.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*steadily*]: Herod with his soldiers set him at nought and mocked him, and arraying him in gorgeous apparel, sent him back to Pilate.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*crying out restlessly*]: Parting his garments, they cast lots, and the people stood by beholding.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*in his inward, brooding voice*]: Jesus saith, I thirst.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*in his slow monotone*]: The soldiers plaited a crown of thorns [*the voice falters*] and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple garment [*the voice falters*]. They struck him with their hands.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*softly*]: About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice saying [*in agony*], My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*in the monotone of sleep*]: The soldiers, therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also the coat. Now the coat [*the voice falters*] was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it but

cast lots for it whose it shall be [*the voice falters*]. These things therefore the soldiers did.

[*The Dream of the Seamless Coat rises to her feet, spreads wide the blue shadowy veil of the dream cloak and lays it over the Soldier, covering him. Then she kneels again.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*quietly*]: When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*absorbed in his dream*]: The soldiers plaited a crown of thorns and put it on his head.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*absorbed in his dream*]: Let us not rend it but cast lots for it whose it shall be.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*absorbed in his dream*]: When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit. And having said this, he gave up the ghost.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*absorbed in his dream*]: Casting lots upon them, what each should take.

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*absorbed in his dream*]: They plaited a crown of thorns and put it on his head.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*absorbed in his dream*]: But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs, howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear [*the voice falters*] pierced his side; and straightway there came out blood and water. And he that hath seen hath borne witness and his witness is true [*in terrible anguish*]. They shall look on him whom they pierced.

[*A space of silence. The Dreams turn and bless their Soldiers with the sign of the Cross. The Dream with the Cross exalts his Cross slowly.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS [*in his dream*]: Thy Kingdom come.

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT [*in his dream*]: Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*in his dream*]: Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest!

[*The Dream of the Seamless Coat gathers up the dream coat. The Dream with the Cross exalts the Cross. The four Dreams, bearing aloft the symbols of the Passion, go past the tomb in slow procession, with the Cross leading them, and out beyond the almond tree.*]

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE [*crying out with a joyful voice in his sleep, as the Dreams vanish*]: Behold, by the Cross joy hath come to the whole world!

THE SOLDIER OF THE THORNS: By the Cross!

THE SOLDIER OF THE COAT: Joy!

THE SOLDIER OF THE LANCE: Hath come to the whole World!

Silence. The soldiers sleep. The white-robed angels of the Resurrection come from behind the tomb. They scatter the palms and flowers of the Galilean Children in a little path-way before the tomb. They set their wingèd shoulders to the great stone and roll it slowly, quietly away from the mouth of the tomb. They stand, one on each side of the open door-way of the tomb, their great wings arched above their bowed heads, their reverent hands folded over their eyes. Silence. The darkness before dawn.

III

Soul's Medicine

A Whitsuntide Miracle of Healing

Hark! the alleluias of the great salvation!
Still beginning, never ending, still begin,
The thunder of an endless adoration:
Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation
Which have kept the truth may enter in.

Christina Rossetti.

The Everyday Folk

Mother Eglantine: *A holy anchoress*
Félélolie: *Her young handmaiden*
John o' Dreams: *Who would turn the world topsy turvy*
Conrad: *Of the University*
Master Theobald: *A physician*
Master Humphrey: *A lawyer*
Master Valentine: *A merchant*
Father Martin: *A parson*
Sir Randal: *Who owns the land roundabout*
Clarimonde: *His fair daughter*

The Lordly Phantasms

The Harper: *A hoary ancient in a white-hooded robe, who carries a harp*
A Knight of the Round Table: *On Quest, and clad in Pentecostal scarlet*
A Sick Knight: *Swathed in bandages and borne on a litter*
A Damsel: *His sister*

KING ARTHUR: *Crowned and sceptred and powerless to heal.*

KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE: *As many as may be, Bors, Kay, Gawaine, Gareth, and any others.*

KNIGHTS WHO GUARD THE GRAIL: *Seven, riding a-horseback, with a device of a white dove on their shields. But if horses are not convenient, they may go afoot.*

GRAIL MAIDENS: *Seven, garlanded; of these five bear lighted tapers, and one bears a spear, the seventh bears the Grail.*

A roadside in spring. On the farther side of the road, a grassy hill with tall up-climbing trees on its slope; and under the hill, at the road's edge, a little Gothic hermitage with a window on the road. At the side of the house, a small garden patch blooming within a low hedge, the gabled door of the house opening into the garden, and a green gate in the hedge leading out to the road. On the peak of the window's arch, a dove cunningly carven with wings outspread and a brass censer hanging from its bill by a chain. The curtain across

the window is black, with a white cross of linen set in the midst, so that the Recluse within the house, seeing the sunlight shine through the white cross, may think upon the Dayspring from on High. Beneath the window, against the side of the house, a bench; and up the hill, a little way above the road, between two trees, another bench. On the hither side of the road, a great wooden cross.

The day is Whitsunday, once upon a time.

[*The anchoress is heard within her cell, singing a hymn.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE:

"Come, Thou Holy Spirit, come!
And from Thy celestial home
Shed a ray of light divine!
Come, Thou father of the poor!
Come, Thou source of all our store!
Come, within our bosoms shine!"

[*While Mother Eglantine is singing, Félélolie comes out of the house into the garden. She is a young girl in a strait russet gown with a hempen girdle about her middle and a flowered kerchief loosely knotted at her throat; a red pocket with a white dove embroidered on it, swings from her girdle; and she has also thrust through her girdle a small pair of tongs. She walks carefully, for she carries in her hands a little brazier with red coals blazing in it. She pushes the green gate open with her knee and comes around the house to the window.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE:

"Thou, of comforters the best;
Thou, the soul's most welcome guest;
Sweet refreshment here below;"

[*Félélolie sets the brazier on the ground under the window, and stepping up on the bench, unhooks the censer from its chain.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE:

"In our labor, rest most sweet;
Grateful coolness in the heat;
Solace in the midst of woe."

[*Félélolie is kneeling on the ground beside the brazier, plucking red coals out of the fire with the tongs, and dropping them into the censer. Mother Eglantine draws the curtain aside and looks out of doors. She wears a gray habit and a white wimple.*]

FÉLÉLOLIE: It is only I, Mother Eglantine, making your Whitsunday fire.

[*Mother Eglantine watches Félélolie fill the censer and climb again upon the bench to hang it in place.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*suddenly, as from a reverie*]: Sing, child,—sing!

[*And as they are singing together, Félélolie hangs up the censer, opens her red pocket, takes out a twisted squill of incense and sprinkles it over the coals.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE AND FÉLÉLOLIE [*singing together*]:

"O most blessed Light divine,
Shine within these hearts of Thine,
And our inmost being fill!
Where Thou art not, man hath naught,
Nothing good in deed or thought,
Nothing free from taint of ill."

[*Still singing, they watch the fragrant smoke rise from the censer, Félélolie standing on the bench, Mother Eglantine in the window.*]

"Heal our wounds; our strength renew;
On our dryness pour Thy dew;
Wash the stains of guilt away:

Bend the stubborn heart and will;
Melt the frozen, warm the chill;
Guide the steps that go astray."

[*Félélolie steps down from the bench and busies herself with the brazier and the tongs. The seven Grail Knights ride by, at a slow pace. They are in silver mail, with flame-colored surcoats, and there are doves blazoned on their shields. Félélolie, not noticing them, takes up the brazier, to go back into the house.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*rapt*]: The seven gifts of the Spirit! See!

FÉLÉLOLIE: Where?—What? [*She stares at Mother Eglantine.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*with hands folded on her breast*]:

"On the faithful, who adore
And confess Thee, evermore
In Thy sevenfold gifts descend;
Give them virtue's sure reward;
Give them Thy salvation, Lord;
Give them joys that never end."

FÉLÉLOLIE: Amen! O Mother Eglantine, what did you see?

MOTHER EGLANTINE: I saw the gifts of the Spirit go riding by, like seven Knights of God; the gift of Holy Fear, the gift of Piety which is Mercy, the gift of Knowledge which is Discretion, the gift of Ghostly Strength, the gift of Counsel whereby man learns to say "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done," the gift of Understanding, which unites us with God and reveals Truth, and quickens Love, the gift of Savouring Wisdom, which is the first gift but also the last. And they were arrayed in the flame of Pentecost, and there was a Dove on their shields.

[*Félélolie has been listening open-mouthed, and walking backward toward the green gate, with the brazier in her hands.*]

FÉLÉLOLIE [*halting a moment at the gate*]: Like the Knights in the Grail story, that

Conrad reads to Sir Randal's daughter for a French lesson! They had doves on their shields!

[*She turns and goes through the gate into the garden. John o' Dreams is coming down the hill through the trees, all red like a wandering flame. Félélolie sees him and stands still in the garden. He comes to the hedge and leans his arms upon it, and looks at her.*]

Mother Eglantine [*at her window, with clasped hands and uplifted eyes*]: "O God, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen." [*She draws the curtain across the window.*]

JOHN O' DREAMS [*quietly*]: They're going to drive me out of town, Félélolie; they're going to make me an outlaw.

FÉLÉLOLIE [*distressfully*]: Oh no! Oh, John, —no; [*She halts in the middle of the garden patch, staring at him, with the brazier in her hands.*]

JOHN O' DREAMS: I've frightened them.

FÉLÉLOLIE: An outlaw!—Like Robin Hood and his men?

JOHN O' DREAMS: Something like. But it won't be all shooting the red deer and robbing the sheriff. I'm a long way beyond Robin. I'll not be waiting outside the law for the King's pardon. It's Kings that'll come to me to pardon them. I've more than a grievance; I've a vision.

FÉLÉLOLIE [*moving slowly toward him*]: Mother Eglantine has a vision almost every day. Sometimes two or three.

JOHN O' DREAMS [*contemptuously*]: I don't mean that kind.

FÉLÉLOLIE: It's a very nice kind. She had one just now. She saw the Knights of the Grail go riding by, with a dove on their shields.

JOHN O' DREAMS [*thoughtfully*]: The Grail!

FÉLÉLOLIE [*pausing beside the hedge and him*]: There were seven of them, Mother Eglantine saw; the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

JOHN O' DREAMS [*still with his elbows on the hedge, staring beyond her as she stands beside him*]: The Grail! It's my quest, too, Félélolie; it's what I'm seeking.—But nobody believes me.

FÉLÉLOLIE: I believe you, John.

JOHN O' DREAMS [*looking at her and suddenly smiling*]: What are you bringing me that pot of charcoal for? How can I kiss you across a bonfire?

FÉLÉLOLIE [*mischievously*]: You can't.

JOHN O' DREAMS: Give it here. [*He takes the brazier out of her hands.*]

FÉLÉLOLIE: It's the Whitsunday fire, John.

JOHN O' DREAMS [*looking down at the brazier curiously*]: This?—I wish it could give me the gift of tongues, Félélolie. I wish I could make them understand.

FÉLÉLOLIE: Them?

JOHN O' DREAMS: That'll run me out of town; old Valentine that owns the shop, and Sir Randal that owns the land, and Master Humphrey their law twister, and Pillbox Theobald that thinks the world is sick with the gout in its great toe, and gout's an hereditary taint, incurable.—I talk a different language from theirs, Félélolie; they don't understand a word I say;—and Parson.

FÉLÉLOLIE: Parson ought to understand.

JOHN O' DREAMS: He ought,—yes.—But the money for his alms-basin and his hospital, and for altar candles and incense and all the rest of it, comes out of their pockets. He's afraid,—Oh, the others don't sur-

prise me—much; but Parson I can't forgive.

FÉLÉLOLIE: You don't mean that he's for making you an outlaw?

JOHN O' DREAMS: He's not against it.

FÉLÉLOLIE: Oh, John! Parson's a good man. It's just that he doesn't understand.

JOHN O' DREAMS: It's his business to understand.—Pentecostal Fire! Flame of the Holy Ghost!—It's his business to talk to me in my own tongue.—Félélolie, if I'm cast out, will you——

FÉLÉLOLIE: Will I what?

JOHN O' DREAMS: Oh, sweet eyes! Oh, honey-sweet lips!—How much longer must I hold this brazier?—Where will you have it?

FÉLÉLOLIE: It was you, asked for it. Bring it round to the doorstone, I'll be needing it again at Terce, to fill the censer. Terce is the hour of the Holy Ghost,—the third

hour,—when the Apostles saw the flames and heard the wind, on Whitsunday. [*She takes one handle and he the other, and with the hedge between them they carry the brazier around to the gate, where he comes into the garden, and together they set it on the doorstone.*

JOHN O' DREAMS [*as they are walking round the hedge, linked by the brazier*]: You fill the censer for the Hours, every day? [*He opens the gate and enters the garden.*]

FÉLÉLOLIE: Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, Compline. Not every day; but this is the Festival of the Holy Spirit. When anchoresses and holy hermits are set apart from us common Christians, the Parson prays a special prayer for them to the Holy Ghost. That's why everybody comes to Mother Eglantine to be counseled and comforted, I'm sure. [*Having set the brazier on the doorstone, they stand a moment, silent, looking in each other's eyes. Then Félélolie says*], Will I what?

JOHN O' DREAMS: If they drive me out, will you come with me, Félélolie? [*He takes her two hands.*]

FÉLÉLOLIE: Like Maid Marian?

JOHN O' DREAMS: Like yourself; little darling! [*He kisses her.*]

FÉLÉLOLIE: When?

JOHN O' DREAMS: To-day,—to-morrow,—all in a minute, when it happens.

FÉLÉLOLIE: Oh, John!—But not until I found someone to take care of Mother Eglantine; to go to market and cook—and all. It's five years to-day since she set foot outside her cell.

JOHN O' DREAMS [*moodily*]: If she's worth her salt to the town, there'll be somebody clamoring to do for her, before you're gone an hour. And if she's not,—why, then,—let her cook her own victuals,—I say.

FÉLÉLOLIE [*horrorstruck*]: You! To speak so—of Mother Eglantine!

JOHN O' DREAMS: Not of her more than of another. It's my vision, Félélolie; a world where a man's worth what he does for his neighbor, not what he makes off him.

FÉLÉLOLIE: But Mother Eglantine——!

JOHN O' DREAMS [*patiently*]: Isn't it what I'm saying? Some of us are worth more to the world by saying prayers than by cooking victuals. See now, sweetheart, let's not you and me lose our common tongue, —love's tongue.

FÉLÉLOLIE [*clinging to him*]: Oh, no, John! But then, there's the banns.

JOHN O' DREAMS: Banns!

FÉLÉLOLIE: To be called in church three weeks, before we're married.

JOHN O' DREAMS: How could I wait for banns, if I'm sent into exile to-morrow morning?

FÉLÉLOLIE: But then, Parson couldn't marry us!

JOHN O' DREAMS: I never thought he would.

FÉLÉLOLIE [*drawing away from him slowly*]: Then what did you think?

[*They stand staring at each other in horrified amazement. Félélolie turns and goes into the house.*]

JOHN O' DREAMS: Félélolie!—Wait!—You don't understand!

[*She shuts the door, and he stands alone in the little garden, staring moodily at the closed door. Conrad and Clarimonde are coming down the hill, among the trees, hand in hand. Conrad wears a scholar's black short gown and trencher cap, and scarlet stockings. He has a parchment-covered book under his arm. Clarimonde is fair and fine in a primrose yellow silken gown and a jeweled girdle; primroses are woven in her hair. They sit down between the two trees on the bench, on the hillside. Conrad opens his book, and together they bend their heads over it. Mother Eglantine is heard singing in her cell.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE:

"Hail thee, Festival Day! blest day that art
hallowed forever;
Day wherein God from heaven shone on the
world with his grace.

"Lo! in the likeness of fire, on them that await
his appearing,
He whom the Lord foretold, suddenly,
swiftly descends.

"Forth from the Father he comes with his
sevenfold mystical dowry,
Pouring on human souls infinite riches of
God.

"Praise to the Spirit of Life, all praise to the
Fount of our being,
Light that dost lighten all, Life that in all
dost abide.

"God Almighty, who fillest the heaven, the
earth and the ocean,
Guard us from harm without, cleanse us from
evil within.

"Kindle our lips with the live bright coal from the hands of the Seraph;
Shine in our minds with thy light; burn in our hearts with thy love."

[*While Mother Eglantine is singing, John o' Dreams lifts his head to hearken; then he goes to the doorstone once more, picks up the brazier, regards it thoughtfully a moment, and carries it to the bench under the anchoress's window. Stepping up on the bench he unhooks the censer and, with the tongs which Félélolie has left lying on the bench, he takes the dead coals from the censer and fills it with the live ones. As he is hanging the censer in its place again, standing on the bench, the anchoress looks out from behind the curtain.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE: Child, it's not yet the third hour; Prime is but a little while past. [*She sees John o' Dreams.*] I thought it was the little maid. What are you doing, young man?

JOHN O' DREAMS [*looking down at her*]: Seeking the gift of tongues, Mother Eglantine, and counsel. I'm in a hard place.

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*setting a little dish of incense on the window sill*]: You might as well sprinkle a bit of incense on the coals, since you're so forehanded with the fire.

[*John o' Dreams sprinkles incense from the dish upon the censer. As the sweet smoke ascends, Mother Eglantine, watching the young man with her keen, kind eyes, sings again, repeating the last two stanzas of the hymn.*]

"God Almighty, who fillest the heaven, the earth and the ocean,
Guard us from harm without, cleanse us from evil within.

"Kindle our lips with the live bright coal from the hands of the Seraph;
Shine in our minds with thy light; burn in our hearts with thy love."

JOHN O' DREAMS: Amen. [*He steps down from the bench and stands before her, awkwardly, his cap in his hand.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE: Well, John, what's the trouble?

JOHN O' DREAMS [*wide arms embracing the universe*]: It's a sick world, Mother Eglantine.

MOTHER EGLANTINE: And you've a cure for it?

JOHN O' DREAMS [*with a gloomy gesture down the road*]: They don't think so.

MOTHER EGLANTINE: What do you want to do, John?

JOHN O' DREAMS [*passionately*]: I want to turn the world upside down.

MOTHER EGLANTINE: You're not the first.

JOHN O' DREAMS: They're for driving me out of town.

MOTHER EGLANTINE: You're lucky they're not for crucifying you.

JOHN O' DREAMS: Crucify?—You mean——?

MOTHER EGLANTINE: I said you were not the first. But is your way His?

JOHN O' DREAMS: It's not Parson's way.

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*soberly*]: Are you saying that Parson's way is not the way of the Crucified? What is it you're trying to say, my son?

JOHN O' DREAMS: I'm saying Parson's way is not my way. You can make what you like out of that.

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*gently*]: First, I'll hear what your way is.

JOHN O' DREAMS: It's a topsy turvy way. You won't understand. My way is to put down the mighty from their seat, and to exalt the humble and meek. I'd fill the hungry with good things, and I'd send the rich away empty. We'll never cure our sick world till we've scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts,—never!

MOTHER EGLANTINE: But, my son, Parson says those words over every day of his life, at vespers. [*She chants*],

"He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away."

JOHN O' DREAMS [*bitterly*]: More shame to him, that he doesn't live by them. A parrot can say words over every day, but does it understand? Come, now, does he live by them?

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*considering sadly*]: But Sir Randal and Master Valentine have the power and the money. What can Parson do?

JOHN O' DREAMS: Do?—He can ask me and my kind to help him. And woe to him if he doesn't!

MOTHER EGLANTINE: You threaten! Wicked boy!

JOHN O' DREAMS [*in great excitement*]: Now hear you, Mother Eglantine, you and your Church! If they thrust me out, and you let them thrust me out, you that cling to the skirts of the mighty,—I'll destroy you with them, you and Mammon, your God!

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*with uplifted arm and stern countenance*]: On your knees, on your knees, John o' Dreams! Repent! Repent! Blasphemer!

JOHN O' DREAMS [*staggering to his knees, as if against his will*]: You don't understand! You don't understand! O Mother Eglantine, it's the Grail I'm seeking!—You don't understand! [*Fallen on his knees, he flings himself against the bench under the window, and kneels there, his arms on the bench, his face buried in his arms, his back to the road.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*casting up eyes and hands in prayer*]: A right judgment, a right judgment in all things! O Spirit of

Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth thee not, neither knoweth thee: dwell with us, be in us, that we may know thee. O Comforter, which art the Holy Ghost, whom the Father sendeth in Christ's name: teach us all things, and bring all things to our remembrance, whatsoever Christ hath said unto us. Amen.

[*The seven Knights of the Grail ride by. Mother Eglantine stands in her window, rapt, with uplifted hands. After the seven Knights on horseback there follows a weary Knight afoot. The seven ride by at a swift pace, but the weary one stops at the wayside cross, on the hither side of the road. He takes off his shield and his helmet and lies down at the foot of the cross, on his shield, and sleeps. A sick man on a litter passes by. The litter bearers are six,—an African decked in strings of bright shells, a Mongolian with a long queue and wearing the rich silk garments of a mandarin, a brown*

Indian in flowing garments and a turban, and three white men, a golden haired Viking, a black haired troubadour, and a brown haired burgess.]

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*crying out in anguish*]: A sick world!—A sick world! O God! And who shall heal it?

[*The litter bearers pause beside the cross and set down the litter. The sick man, rising on his elbow, stretches out his other hand in appeal to the sleeping Knight, and seems to plead with him. But it is Mother Eglantine who pleads.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE: By the Grail only shall the world be healed! Who is he who shall bring again the Grail to a sick world? "When shall this sorrow leave me, and when shall the holy vessel come by me, wherethrough I shall be blessed? For I have endured thus long, for little trespass. Take heed unto me that I may be whole of this malady."

[*The sleeping Knight lies still as a stone on his shield. The litter-bearers lift the litter and bear the sick man away, down the road. After them comes a hoary ancient in a hermit's white hooded gown, with a harp in his hand, and sits down on the steps of the Cross, beside the sleeping Knight, and strikes his harp, and makes as if he were chanting a lay. But it is Mother Eglantine who chants that lay. And at the sound of her chanting come Conrad and Clarimonde down from their bench on the hillside, and Félélolie out of the house into the garden. And these three peer around the corner of the hedge and see John o' Dreams on his knees, and Mother Eglantine singing. And they stand at the green gate looking on one another and listening, finger on lip, and smiling. But they hear, only; their eyes are on one another. The vision is not for them.*

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*chanting*]:

Afar in the silver twilight,
Where the Celtic heathen dwell,
And all the world is a shadow-place,
And the shadow moves in a spell—
They saw it first, they tell.

And what they saw was a cauldron,
And a spear-point dropping blood,
And whoso suppeth once that brew
Shall need none other food.
Nor Christ was yet on rood.

'Anon, they will that they saw it,
And Christ was long years dead:
A stone they saw, whereon a dove
A holy wafer laid.
It was the stone, they said.

And Joseph of Arimathea,
He bare from Calvary
A little dish that Christ's blood caught
When Christ hanged on the tree—
That dish it well might be.

"A thing," they said, "that appeareth,
And vanisheth whence it came;

Yet, not one thing, but many things;
The same, and not the same—
The Grail," they said, "is its name."

In good King Fisherman's castle
By night that thing was seen,
Where fast behind a dripping spear
A maiden, whole and clean,
Bare it, her hands between.

In empty wayside chapels
It bode a little space;
In desert wilds it sang and shined;
But most its dwelling place
Was dream—by Goddès grace.

And all King Arthur's ménýé,
The flow'r of chivalrie,
They vowed to seek that holy thing,
And who that might it see,
The best Knight he must be.

And some there be will have it
How Galahad was best;
And some do say, despite his sin,
The Old Book hath confessed
'Twas Percivale won the quest.

But one, the glory of Knighthood,
No vision hath him got,
That in well-loving sorely sinned,
And aye repented not—
The fair Sir Launcelot.

And haply Galahad saw it,
And haply Percivale,
But still there be that hold that quest
To seek the Holy Grail;
And still there be that fail.

And ever the land of Logres
Lies wasting and accurst,
Till one shall bring again the cup
To quench a Kingdom's thirst,—
The cup Christ tasted first.

"A thing," they said, "that appeareth,
The same, and not the same;
A little child, the Crucified,
A chalice crowned with flame—
The Grail," they said, "is its name."

It came from out of the twilight
Or ever dawned the day;

It changeth oft, it vanisheth,
It passeth not away—
  Nor never shall, we pray.

It lureth the valiant onward,
"Who knoweth Me, is blest."
Lay down, lay down thy darling sin,
And set thy lance in rest:
  The Quest, brother, the Quest!

[*The procession of the Grail passes by. First, a maiden in the soft hues of dawn and doves, bearing in her hands a blood-stained spear. After her, two maidens, side by side, in the tender shimmering green color of young birch leaves, and bearing tall lighted tapers in golden candlesticks. Then, the Grail-bearer, walking alone; over her golden kirtle she wears a robe of rainbow; in her two hands she bears aloft the Grail chalice covered with a golden veil. Three maidens follow the Grail, side by side, in green again, with lights. All the maidens and the Grail maiden are wreathed and garlanded with spring*

flowers. They pass by at a slow pace. The old man lays down his harp and falls on his knees. The Knight sleeps, as always, motionless upon his shield. While the Grail is passing, Conrad is leaning on the green gate, turning the leaves of his book and talking to Clarimonde and Félélolie who look over his right shoulder and his left, following his finger on the book's page.]

CONRAD: She is telling John the story of the Grail. Some of it is her own telling, but some of it is in this very book. Do you see? I will make it English. [*He points to the page and they follow his finger.*]

"When shall this sorrow leave me, and when shall the holy vessel come by me, wherethrough I shall be blessed." The very words of the book — and here again——

FÉLÉLOLIE: I think you are mistaken, Conrad. I think John is confessing his sins.

CLARIMONDE: But you cannot read, Félélolie; what can you know? Here are the words —"Take—heed—unto—me—that—I—be —whole—of—this—malady"——

FÉLÉLOLIE: Still, I think John is confessing his sins. He is on his knees. And—he has a sin. And I think Mother Eglantine is seeing a vision.

CONRAD: Do you think she is seeing a vision of the Grail?

FÉLÉLOLIE: Perhaps. She saw the seven Knights of the Grail ride by this morning, the seven Knights that are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

CLARIMONDE [*awestruck*]: Perhaps she is seeing it now! What if the Grail were passing by?

[*They all three stare out upon the road, unseeing. The Grail passes out of sight, down the road. The hoary ancient rises from his knees and takes his harp as if he would follow after. The Knight awakes from his sleep, sits up and beats*

his breast, as if he made a lamentation. But the words of the lamentation come from the lips of John o' Dreams, who has lifted his head and his arms, and speaks, from his knees, to Mother Eglantine.]

JOHN O' DREAMS: Mea culpa! My sin hath found me out. Pride! Who so proud as the peasant? Or who so proud as the common man working with his hands? I am he!—I said, Christ gave me the secret to save the world. I am the only one. I alone!—I said, the glory shall be mine. Lo, I will enslave my brother!—For why? —Did not my brother hold me in bondage? — Pride! — Pride! — I have sinned against fellowship. I have sinned against love. Christ have mercy!

MOTHER EGLANTINE: Lord have mercy!

JOHN O' DREAMS [*beating his breast*]: Mea culpa! My sin hath found me out!— Wrath! I said, I am trodden under foot of the rich. I starve; body and soul!

Rise up, rise up, and slay the oppressor, O Hungry and Downtrodden and Scorned! And in my heart I slew him—Wrath!—Wrath!—I have sinned against fellowship. I have sinned against love. Christ have mercy!

MOTHER EGLANTINE: Lord have mercy!

JOHN O' DREAMS: Wrath!—I said to my oppressor, if I envy, whose fault?—If I covet, whose fault?—If I am greedy, whose fault?—If I am dull and slothful, whose fault?—Who has kept me hungry and naked and stupid, O my oppressor?—And I was angry with my brother. Wrath!—Red wrath! Mea culpa! I have sinned against fellowship! I have sinned against fellowship! I have sinned against love! Christ have mercy!

MOTHER EGLANTINE: Lord have mercy!

JOHN O' DREAMS: Mea culpa! [*He beats his breast.*] Lust! He that betrayeth the belovèd, betrayeth his very self. I made a a boast to set the world free, but I have

dishonored liberty. O blind, destroying lust!—I have sinned against fellowship! I have sinned against love. Mea culpa! Lord have mercy!

MOTHER EGLANTINE: Christ have mercy!

JOHN O' DREAMS: Fellowship! Fellowship! O my dream, I have sinned against thee! Christ have mercy!

MOTHER EGLANTINE: Lord have mercy!

JOHN O' DREAMS: "My sin and my wickedness have brought me unto great dishonor. For when I sought worldly adventures for worldly desires; I ever achieved them and had the better in every place, and never was I discomfit in no quarrel, were it right or wrong. And now I take upon me the adventures of holy things, and now I see and understand that mine old sin hindereth me and shameth me, so that I had no power to stir nor speak when the holy blood appeareth before me."

CONRAD [*excited*]: The words of the book! See!—I tell you, he is seeing a vision of

the Grail out of the old Romance. "And now I take upon me the adventures of holy things"——

FÉLÉLOLIE: I tell you, he is confessing his sins.

CLARIMONDE: Then ought we to listen?

CONRAD: Hark!

[*And now the old man with the harp seems to be admonishing the Knight, by the Cross. But the admonition comes from the lips of Mother Eglantine.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*to John o' Dreams*]: "Ye ought to thank God—for He hath caused you to have more worldly worship than any Knight that now liveth. And for your presumption to take upon you in deadly sin for to be in His presence, where His flesh and His blood was, that caused you ye might not see it with worldly eyes; for He will not appear where such sinners be, but if it be unto their great hurt and unto their great shame; and there is no knight living now that ought to give God

so great thank as ye, for He hath given you beauty, seemliness, and great strength above all other; and therefore ye are the more beholding unto God than any other man, to love Him and dread Him, for your strength and manhood will little avail you an God be against you."

JOHN O' DREAMS: "I pray you counsel me."

MOTHER EGLANTINE: "Now take heed, in all the world men shall not find one—to whom Our Lord hath given so much of grace as He hath given you, for He hath given you fairness with seemliness, He hath given thee wit, discretion to know good from evil, He hath given thee prowess and hardiness,—and now Our Lord will suffer thee no longer, but that thou shalt know Him whether thou wilt or nylt."

JOHN O' DREAMS: "Certes, all that you have said is true, and from hence forward I cast me, by the grace of God, never to be so wicked as I have been."

[*The old man with the harp makes the sign of the cross upon the brow of the Knight, and at the same time Mother Eglantine makes the sign of the cross upon the brow of John o' Dreams. The old man goes down the road playing his harp. The Knight takes up his shield and follows after.*]

JOHN O' DREAMS [*chanting on his knees*]:
And ever the land of Logres
Lies wasting and accurst,
Till one shall bring again the cup
To quench a Kingdom's thirst,—
The cup Christ tasted first.

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*passing her hand over her eyes and gazing about her in bewilderment*]: A right judgment,—a right judgment in all things, O God! [*Abruptly*] John o' Dreams!

JOHN O' DREAMS [*rising from his knees and rubbing his eyes*]: Yes, Mother Eglantine.

MOTHER EGLANTINE: Go you into town and bring me Master Valentine and Master Humphrey and Master Theobald and——

JOHN O' DREAMS: They'll never come at my bidding.

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*musing*]: Likely not.—Have you no friends, John?

JOHN O' DREAMS: Conrad, of the University, is half-way my friend, some days.

CONRAD [*hurrying round the corner of the house, followed by Clarimonde and Félélolie, and speaking with gay impudence*]: This is one of my friendly days; let me bring them, Mother Eglantine; I think they'll come for me.

MOTHER EGLANTINE: What do you know about it, Conrad?

CONRAD [*slightly abashed*]: I was listening.

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*regarding him humorously*]: The observer! I hope you were edified.

CONRAD [*hanging his head*]: No; only puzzled.

MOTHER EGLANTINE: Bring them here to me, and let us see if we can clear up the puzzle. And Clarimonde will go up to the manor house and bring her father. You, Félélolie, run to the parsonage and bid Parson come —at the third hour. [*She draws the curtain across her window.*]

JOHN O' DREAMS [*eagerly*]: Did you see the Knight asleep at the Cross, Conrad?—Did you see the old man singing the song of the Grail to his harp?—Did you see—the Grail—pass by?

CLARIMONDE [*in eager awe*]: Did—the Grail —pass by?

CONRAD: We saw the road, and the wayside Cross yonder, and the wild flowers in the meadow, and the spring sunshine. But no one passed by on the road.

CLARIMONDE: We heard you and Mother Eglantine saying the words out of the Book of the Grail——

JOHN O' DREAMS: Mother Eglantine and I said nothing.

CONRAD [*opening the book*]: "And now Our Lord will suffer thee no longer, but that thou shalt know Him whether thou wilt or nylt."

JOHN O' DREAMS: It was not Mother Eglantine, it was the old white hermit with the harp.

CONRAD: And you said [*reading,*] "Certes, all that you have said is true, and from henceforward I cast me, by the grace of God, never to be so wicked as I have been."

JOHN O' DREAMS: How could you hear me say them? It was the Knight by the Cross who said them. I saw him. I heard him.

CONRAD: But you were kneeling with your back to the road, John.

JOHN O' DREAMS: I saw him. I heard him. [*He pauses, musing.*] But it is true, I said them, too—in my heart.—"My sin and my wickedness have brought me unto

great dishonor,"—who said that?—Did he?—Did I?——Pride—Wrath—Lust—mea culpa.—Who was confessing my sins? "So that I had no power to stir nor speak when the holy blood appeared before me." Did I say it?

CLARIMONDE: And you saw—the Grail?

JOHN O' DREAMS: I must not speak of that.

[*He covers his eyes with his arms.*]

[*They gaze at him, hushed, for a little space; then, without further speech, Conrad goes down the road toward the town, with head bent in deep thought, and Clarimonde goes up the hill slowly, looking back once or twice.*]

FÉLÉLOLIE [*touching his elbow, timidly*]: John,—it wasn't nice of us,—but we heard you repenting of your sins.

JOHN O' DREAMS [*uncovering his face and looking at her with slow smile*]: And who should have a better right than you, to hear me repent of my sins?

FÉLÉLOLIE [*hurriedly*]: I must go for Parson.

[*She runs down the road, looks back, and he kisses his hand to her. She waves. John o' Dreams sits down on the top step of the Cross with his head leaning against the upright beam and his hands clasped around one knee.*]

JOHN O' DREAMS:

And haply Galahad saw it,
And haply Percivale,
But still there be that hold that quest
To seek the Holy Grail;
And still there be that fail.

And still there be that fail.—Oh, John,—John o' Dreams, and you only a common workingman with a simple heart! If the gentry can't do it, what chance for you?

And ever the land of Logres
Lies wasting and accurst,
Till one shall bring again the cup
To quench a Kingdom's thirst,—
The cup Christ tasted first.

A sick world! And when I say drink and be healed, it doesn't understand. But who am I, to expect it to understand? Who am I, to dare to offer a sick world the cup of sacrifice? I am not worthy to be the cup-bearer.

[*He muses, his chin in his hand, silently for a little space. Presently, he speaks again.*]

But it must drink;—how shall I make it understand?

[*He kneels on the top step of the Cross, with his clasped hands above his head, and his forehead pressed against the upright beam of the Cross.*]

"God, who art Giver of all good gifts and Lover of Concord,——

"Kindle my lips with the live bright coal from the hands of the Seraph."

Give me the voice of humility, give me the word of imagination, give me the tongue of love. Give me the gift of understanding all men, that I may be understood of all men. For His sake who came that we

might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. Amen.

[*He sits again on the steps of the Cross, his hands clasped around his knee, his head leaning against the upright beam. He meditates silently, for a brief while; then he says:*]

If Parson would only meet me half way.—If Mother Eglantine would but persuade him.

[*Clarimonde and Sir Randal are seen coming down the hill. Sir Randal is a courtly gentleman of middle age, in a dark brown velvet short gown with hanging sleeves, fur trimmed; his long stockings and boots are tawny orange color. His voice is raised in dudgeon.*]

Sir Randal: The first Randal had this land from William the Conqueror. The record is in Domesday Book. It's my land.

Clarimonde: Mother Eglantine says, "The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is;

the compass of the world, and they that dwell therein."

SIR RANDAL: Don't quote Scripture at me, young woman. Mother Eglantine would soon find out who owned the land, if I shut up the anchorage and sent her packing. But she's a sensible woman; she knows which side her bread's buttered on.

CLARIMONDE: She doesn't eat butter.

SIR RANDAL [*glaring at his daughter, and then laughing helplessly*]: It's plain that you do,—little slippery tongue! If I did my duty by you, I'd shut you up on bread and water, for a month. [*He pauses at the bench on the hillside.*] We'll sit here till the others gather. I don't care to bandy words with yonder fellow.

CLARIMONDE: But how will you ever understand what he's driving at, father, if you'll never talk with him, man to man?

SIR RANDAL [*testily*]: I'm not interested in what he's driving at.

CLARIMONDE [*wistfully*]: But I am.

SIR RANDAL [*moodily*]: This comes of trying to cram a boy's schooling into a girl's noddle. This comes of tutoring and languages. I'll send the tutor packing, next.

CLARIMONDE [*gently*]: Then I'll go with him, father.

SIR RANDAL [*regarding her without surprise, but with bitter grief*]: And break your father's loving heart?

CLARIMONDE: You'd have the land, father.

[*He turns his face away from her and stares out through the trees. Presently, he draws a large handkerchief from his pouch and blows his nose. Clarimonde sidles to him, along the bench, and puts her arm round his neck. And so they sit, but with averted faces. Voices are heard, coming down the road. John o' Dreams gets to his feet, crosses the road and kneels beside the brazier, by the bench, stirring the coals and blowing upon them.*]

THE VOICE OF CONRAD: No; I saw nothing myself, but Mother Eglantine and John were both rapt, in the spirit. Mother Eglantine was chanting of the Grail.

VOICES: The Grail!

[*Conrad, Master Theobald, Master Humphrey, and Master Valentine come along the road. Master Humphrey has Conrad by the right arm; he wears a rich gray green gown, girded with a sash of striped Roman silk. Master Valentine has Conrad by the left arm; he wears a rich gown and hose of the colors of heliotrope and amethyst, with a Flemish beaver hat of those same colors and gray boots of fine leather; his garments are edged with gray fur. Clinging to his other arm is Master Theobald, in a dull blue gown and hose, and his long sleeves lined with taffeta, striped blue and black. They are all three men of middle age, and a sober and prosperous port.*]

MASTER VALENTINE: Do you think it was the Grail they saw?

CONRAD: I didn't see it.

MASTER HUMPHREY [*slily*]: I'm told it only appears to the pure in heart.

MASTER VALENTINE: Why should that fellow see it, then?

MASTER THEOBALD: May be the Devil's in it. [*They pause by the Cross.*]

CONRAD: But Mother Eglantine saw it, too.

MASTER THEOBALD [*sitting down on the steps of the Cross*]: These hermits and recluses are sometimes easier deceived by the Devil than us ordinary folk. It's a part of their guilelessness.

MASTER HUMPHREY [*sitting down beside him on the steps of the Cross and poking him in the ribs*]: Skeptic!

MASTER VALENTINE [*sitting down heavily*]: If she's brought me here to wheedle me

into turning my shop over to that young windbag, I'm certain sure the Devil's in it.

[*The others laugh. John is still busy with the brazier. The Parson and Félélolie come hurrying along the road. The Parson wears his cassock and shovel hat.*]

FATHER MARTIN [*to Félélolie*]: My child, these are not affairs on which a priest and parson can expect to have an opinion. These are affairs of buying and selling, affairs of food and clothes and drink and housing. A parson's realm is the human soul.

MASTER VALENTINE [*clapping his hands*]: Hear! Hear! You were always one after my own heart, Father Martin. [*He makes room for the Parson on the step beside him.*]

FÉLÉLOLIE [*standing in the road and regarding the group on the steps of the Cross with disapproval*]: Mother Eglantine read to

me out of the Gospels, where Jesus said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." [*Conrad, who is also standing in the road, gazing at the group beneath the Cross, laughs suddenly, and Félélolie continues.*] That looks as if buying and selling, and food and drink and clothes and houses had something to do with souls.

MASTER VALENTINE [*shaking his finger at Félélolie*]: Mother Eglantine would do better to box your ears instead of filling them with words too wise for you to understand.

MASTER THEOBALD: The girl is bilious. It's the spring in her blood.

JOHN O' DREAMS [*suddenly calling out, from where he kneels beside the brazier*]: Yes; it's the spring in our blood; it's the resurrection tide. Mother Eglantine says it is

written in the Scriptures, "Behold, I make all things new." The spring is in our blood, mine and Félélolie's.

CONRAD: And mine,—I hope.

CLARIMONDE [*calling from the hillside, down which she and her father are winding*]: And mine!—And mine!

[*Mother Eglantine begins to sing, behind her window curtain. Félélolie hurries over to the window. John o' Dreams climbs upon the bench and unhooks the censer. He hands it to Félélolie, who selects the reddest coals from the brazier and drops them into the censer with the tongs. She hands the censer up to John o' Dreams, who hangs it in the dove's beak. Félélolie opens her pocket and takes out a squill of incense. She hands this to John, who untwists it and sprinkles the incense into the censer. Meanwhile, Mother Eglantine, always singing, has pushed aside her curtain.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE:

When Christ our Lord had passed once more
Into the heaven he left before,
He sent a Comforter below,
The Father's promise to bestow.

The solemn time was soon to fall
Which told the number mystical;
For since the Resurrection day,
A week of weeks had passed away.

At the third hour a rushing noise
Came like the tempest's sudden voice,
And mingled with the Apostles' prayer,
Proclaiming loud that God was there.

From out the Father's light it came,
That beautiful and kindly flame,
To kindle every Christian heart,
And fervour of the Word impart.

JOHN O' DREAMS AND FÉLÉLOLIE [*singing with Mother Eglantine*]:

As then, O Lord, thou didst fulfil,
Each holy heart to do thy will,
So now do thou our sins forgive
And make the world in peace to live.

CONRAD AND CLARIMONDE [*singing with the other three*]:

To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit; praise be done;
May Christ the Lord upon us pour
The Spirit's gift forevermore. Amen.

[*When the Amen is sung, they all hurry toward Mother Eglantine's window. Conrad, Parson, the merchant, the lawyer, the doctor, cross the road, running; Clarimonde and Sir Randal come swiftly round the corner of the garden; Félélolie and John o' Dreams turn to the anchoress eager hands and faces. The hands and faces of all are uplifted, and every mouth is opened as if hasting to speak.*]

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*lifting a warning arm*]:

It is the third Hour. The Spirit of the Lord filleth the world. Alleluia! O unruly tongues, beware lest ye speak that which is displeasing to the Holy Ghost! O unloving hearts, hush!—Be still!

[*They are arrested, suddenly, even as they*

run. And so they stand, dumb, with arms uplifted and heads upflung. And awe creeps into their faces, and terror into their eyes, and one by one they sink to their knees and bow their heads in their hands. Félélolie and John o' Dreams are kneeling facing each other, one at each end of the bench under the window; Conrad and Clarimonde are kneeling side by side, their heads bent on the bench immediately below Mother Eglantine. The others kneel on the grass behind those four, and the faces of all are turned away from the road. The seven Knights of the Spirit ride by, at a solemn pace. Mother Eglantine stands at the window, with hands clasped as if in prayer. After the seven Knights, the Court of King Arthur walks, afoot, with pages to hold up the mantles of the King and Queen, and a sufficient number of Knights and ladies. The Court of King Arthur pauses beside the Cross. The sick man on his litter is borne along the road, and a fair

lady walks beside the litter, with a long fan to ease the breathing of the sick man, and pages bear his shield and sword. The bearers set down the litter at the foot of the Cross, in the midst of the Court of King Arthur. And now, in dumb show, the fair lady kneels to King Arthur, asking that he search the wounds of the sick Knight, to heal him. And King Arthur essays to heal the sick Knight, but without avail. And one by one, other knights search the seven wounds of the sick Knight, but without avail. And all this is a vision in dumb show, but as one knight and another fail to heal the sick Knight, the voices, now of the merchant, now of the lawyer, now of the doctor, are heard to cry aloud, Mea Culpa! Mea Culpa! *And each one as he cries aloud is seen to beat his breast. And the voice of Parson cries, like an echo, after each one,* Mea Culpa! *And Parson is seen to cast himself prostrate upon the ground. Then, when the*

Knights of the vision have failed, Conrad arises from his knees like a sleep-walker and turns about and crosses the road, and Clarimonde following; and Conrad stands in the midst of the vision of Arthur's Court and essays to heal the sick man, but Conrad's arms are heavy at his side, he cannot lift them to touch the sick man. And standing still as an image in the midst of the vision he cries, Mea Culpa! Mea Culpa! *But he cannot lift his arms to beat his breast. And Clarimonde stands beside him. Then John o' Dreams leaps up from his knees, with rapt face and visionary eyes, and runs down to the road, and with him Félélolie. And John o' Dreams, also as one that walks in his sleep, halts in the middle of the road, and standing with face uplifted to heaven and eyes fixed, cries out aloud.*]

JOHN O' DREAMS: I know the way!—I know the way!—But of myself I am nothing.

Oh, brothers, brothers, help me, for Christ's sake!

[*The procession of the Grail comes down the road. Parson rises up from the grass where he has lain prostrate, and gropes his way like a blind man to the road. The Grail bearer comes to Parson, lifts the chalice-veil and places the cup in Parson's groping hands. John o' Dreams and Félélolie kneel at his feet and pluck at his cassock. He holds out the cup and they drink, in turn. John o' Dreams and Félélolie rise from their knees, and one on the one side of Parson, another on the other side, they guide him into the midst of the vision by the Cross. The Court of King Arthur, and Conrad and Clarimonde are as images bespelled, awaiting the approach of Parson with the cup. The procession of the Grail waits, on the road. John o' Dreams and Félélolie bring Parson to the litter. John puts his hand on*

the sick man. Then, on a sudden, all the Knights of the Court and King Arthur start forward and lay hands, all of them, and Conrad, on the sick man, and they lift him off the litter and stand him upright on his feet, and lower him to his knees. Parson gives him to drink of the cup. The Grail Bearer now comes from the procession, takes the cup from Parson, and goes back to the procession, which still stands in the road. John o' Dreams and the others lift the sick man to his feet. Félélolie girds on his sword, Clarimonde gives him his shield. The Grail procession moves down the road followed by the healed Knight and his lady, King Arthur and his Court, and the empty litter borne by the litter bearers.

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*chanting, as the vision vanishes down the road*]:

And ever the land of Logres
Lies wasting and accurst,

Till one shall bring again the cup
To quench a Kingdom's thirst,—
  The cup Christ tasted first.

"A thing," they said, "that appeareth,
The same, and not the same;
A little child, the Crucified—
A chalice crowned with flame—
  The Grail," they said, "is its name."

It came from out of the twilight
Or ever dawned the day;
It changeth oft, it vanisheth,
It passeth not away—
  Nor never shall, we pray.

It lureth the valiant onward,
"Who knoweth Me, is blest."
Lay down, lay down thy darling sin,
And set thy lance in rest:
  The Quest, brother, the Quest!

[*Conrad, Clarimonde, Félélolie, John o' Dreams, and Parson, are left standing like creatures in a dream, facing the wayside cross. Master Valentine, Master Humphrey, Master Theobald,*

and Sir Randal, kneel, as always, with their faces toward Mother Eglantine. The procession has vanished. Those by the Cross turn slowly and gaze upon one another. Those by the anchorage rise stiffly from their knees and gaze upon one another. Mother Eglantine passes her hand slowly across her eyes. All the others, by the Cross and by the anchorage, pass their hands slowly across their eyes.]

MOTHER EGLANTINE: It is the Third Hour. The Spirit of the Lord filleth the world. Alleluia! Let us speak now, as the Spirit shall give us utterance. Let us say the words that shall be understood of every nation under heaven.

ALL [*crying aloud and beating their breasts*]: My fault, my fault, my own most grievous fault!—My sin hath found me out. I have hated my brother,—Woe! Woe!—I have forgotten my God.—Lord have mercy! —Christ have mercy!

[*They all look upon one another curiously, with troubled eyes. Then, one by one, they speak.*]

MASTER VALENTINE [*suddenly, to no one in particular, his eyes fixed on the distance, his voice passionate and brooding*]: I beheld my Conscience, face to face. I saw myself as I am.

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*gently*]: Not as you are, Master Valentine; as you were.

MASTER VALENTINE [*hesitating*]: As I was? —God grant it!—I saw myself as I was. I dreamed that my name was Dives, and I was giving a feast. And there was a beggar at the gate, full of sores; his name was Lazarus. [*He makes a gesture of despair*] You know the story,—Dives! [*He covers his face with his hands and falls on his knees.*] O Christ, give me a new name!

MASTER HUMPHREY: My dream came down the road, yonder. [*He points. Those by the Cross move across the road slowly,*

listening to Master Humphrey.] I dreamed of a traveler who fell among thieves. I saw him beaten and stripped. I saw the priest go by. I saw the Levite go by. I saw the Samaritan——

CONRAD [*in a hushed voice*]: Who were you?

MASTER HUMPHREY [*hanging his head*]: A certain lawyer. I had asked the law's eternal question—Who is my neighbor? —I know now. [*He stands with head drooped on his breast.*]

MASTER THEOBALD: I dreamed the world was sick, here,—at the foot of the hill. I dreamed the sick world was a sick boy fallen in a fit. And I was sure I could cure him,—but I couldn't. He frothed and foamed at the mouth,—he shrieked and struggled and fell upon the ground. He was the world, and he was sick. And I was helpless. And someone came down the hill, and the crowd got in my way. I couldn't see. But I heard someone say "This kind can come forth by nothing,

but by prayer and fasting." [*He sinks to his knees*] Lord, teach me to pray.

SIR RANDAL: I, too, dreamed of a feast. It was not my feast; I was bidden to it. And I went in and sat down beside the Master of the feast, for I looked, and I was the only man of rank there. And the Master of the feast asked me to move down. And he set John o' Dreams and Félélolie on his left and his right hand. And I was below the salt.

CLARIMONDE [*softly*]: But I was beside you, father; I know I must have been.

CONRAD: And I.

SIR RANDAL: It was so mortifying. [*He covers his face with his hands.*] Not being asked to move,—but that I should have presumed to sit in the chief seat. So very mortifying.

CLARIMONDE [*tenderly*]: One does those things in dreams. But now we are awake, Father; we sha'n't do them when we are awake.

SIR RANDAL [*wistfully*]: You think not?

CONRAD: I, too, saw a vision of a sick world, but mine was not the dream of Master Theobald. I saw a vision of the healing of Sir Urre, out of my French book, here, [*He opens his book.*] I saw the sick Knight and his sister come to Arthur's Court——

CLARIMONDE: Oh Conrad, Conrad, your vision and mine are one! I saw the sick Knight. I saw Arthur's Court!

CONRAD: Your vision and mine are one; yes, sweetheart.

CLARIMONDE [*eagerly*]: And the Knights searched the wounds of the sick world, but they could not heal him, and then——

CONRAD: And then I crossed the road,—did you see me?——

CLARIMONDE [*hanging her head*]: Yes.

CONRAD: Tell them.

CLARIMONDE [*wistfully*]: Need we?

CONRAD: I must.

CLARIMONDE [*sadly*]: And Conrad could not heal the sick world.

CONRAD [*scorning himself*]: I could not even lift these arms, I could not even move these fingers to search his wounds. I, who had been the onlooker so long;—in my vision I was even as the sick Knight, I was helpless.

FÉLÉLOLIE: But John came into the vision.

CLARIMONDE [*wondering*]: Was it your vision, too?

CONRAD: It was John who——

JOHN O' DREAMS [*hurriedly*]: Not I alone; it was all of us together. I could have done nothing by myself; it was all of us together who did it. It was really Parson who——

MOTHER EGLANTINE [*calling*]: Father Martin, Father Martin, tell us your dream!

PARSON: I had no dream, I saw no vision.

JOHN O' DREAMS: But I,—but you?——

PARSON: Darkness—and then—the voice of my Saviour and my God, crying, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath appointed me to preach the gospel to the poor;—to preach the gospel to the poor;—to the poor;—the poor." [*He falls on his knees and beats his breast.*] Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

MOTHER EGLANTINE: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God,—they are the sons of God. Alleluia!"

FÉLÉLOLIE: Mother Eglantine, tell us what you saw.

MOTHER EGLANTINE: Children, I saw a world repentant. I saw the proud forsaking the imagination of their hearts; I saw the mighty exalting the humble and the meek; I saw the rich filling the hungry with their good things. I saw the Kingdom come on earth.

JOHN O' DREAMS, FÉLÉLOLIE, CONRAD, CLARIMONDE, MOTHER EGLANTINE [*all as with one voice crying out together*]:

Lay down, lay down thy darling sin
And set thy lance in rest:
The Quest, brother, the Quest!

ALL [*singing, while Félélolie and John o' Dreams, with coals and incense, once more light the censer*]:

"As then, O Lord, thou didst fulfil
Each holy heart to do thy will,
So now do thou our sins forgive
And make the world in peace to live.
To God the Father, God the Son,

And God the Spirit, praise be done;
May Christ the Lord upon us pour
The Spirit's gift forever more. Amen."

IV

Santa Conversazione

An All Saints Miracle

These through the darkness of death,
the dominion of night,
Swept, and they woke in white places
at morning-tide;
They saw with their eyes, and sang for
joy of the sight,
They saw with their eyes the eyes of
the Crucified.

Lionel Johnson.

Those Present

In the Flesh:

A Wounded American Soldier
An English Officer
A German Prisoner
A Poilu
A Belgian Child

In the Spirit:

Jeanne d'Arc
St. Francis of Assisi
St. George of England
St. Elizabeth of Hungary and Thuringia
Tolstoy

The Time:

The Festival of All Saints, which is the Vigil of All Souls, 1917. During a bombardment.

The Place:

Inside a ruined village church, somewhere in France. There are no candles in the little

church, but through the empty windows, and through the ragged holes in the roof, light comes,—the sudden bright pulse of star-shells, the red burst of intermittent 75's, the climbing radiance of the hunter's moon,—light enough to reveal the heaped up fragments of stone saints within the riven chancel rail, the shattered altar where the bomb fell, the great crucifix untouched on the altar wall. Light enough to waken sparkles of splintered fourteenth century glass all over the littered floor, to touch to phantom gold the bloody truss of straw below the cracked baptismal font. Light is shining through St. Elizabeth's filmy, splendid, pale blue mantle, where she crouches huddled on the altar steps, all her pearl embroideries a-wink; and the moon has found the sleepy yellow head of the little Belgian girl, and Tolstoy's drifting beard. There are three high windows and two long niches in the north wall, a window and a niche, a window and a niche, and a window; but the images of the saints that used to stand in the niches on gray toes kissed all shiny smooth, are fallen out on their poor perishable noses; and Tolstoy, shadowy

white in his peasant's blouse, sits brooding in the one niche; and in the other the little Belgian lies curled round, kitten-fashion.

The church door was blown to bits yesterday, and when St. Francis comes through the moonlit doorway, in his habit as he lived, moonshine follows his feet, and St. Elizabeth brightens, and Tolstoy smiles. At this time there is no one else in the little church.

ST. FRANCIS [*surprised at Tolstoy*] : You here? I thought you would be in Russia.

TOLSTOY: But you are not in Italy.

ST. FRANCIS: I go back before dawn. But I could not bear the thought of all these holy places voiceless, on our festa; so a group of us got together and pledged ourselves to read the Gospel for the Day, in the ruined churches. Athanasius, Augustine, Chrysostom and some of the younger ones are covering Poland; and Columba and Patrick and Alban asked for the Belgian district, with the local saints. Francis de Sales, Francis Xavier and I offered for northern France, under the direction of Gregory of Tours.

TOLSTOY: You must have had enough to do, not to miss any.

ST. FRANCIS: Yes; in some of these villages the people cannot find their church. But I could always tell where it had been. This is my last.

TOLSTOY [*grimly*]: Next year there may be ruined churches in Italy.

ST. FRANCIS [*covering his eyes*]: Yes; defeat seems to be coming to Italy; for the moment.

ST. ELIZABETH [*gently*]: Only for the moment.

ST. FRANCIS [*still with his face bowed in his hands*]: Yes; I know. But it is hard for them. All their white peaks lost!

ST. ELIZABETH: For the moment.

ST. FRANCIS [*lifting his head to smile at her*]: I know, sister. I know.

TOLSTOY: Knowing doesn't help—much.

ST. FRANCIS [*turning his whimsical smile on Tolstoy*]: So you ran away from your Bolsheviki millennium, even knowing?

TOLSTOY [*on the defensive*]: Still it would be the millennium, if—if——

ST. FRANCIS: If the keystone of the rainbow were hate.

ST. ELIZABETH: Ah, how to escape that?—Hate!

ST. FRANCIS: Not by coming to France, sister.

ST. ELIZABETH: They are so hungry in my Germany, my Austria, so very hungry. And my old miracle is buried in my grave. I cannot make bread of roses any more.

ST. FRANCIS [*suggestively*]: There is always the Living Bread.

ST. ELIZABETH: Go, you, and try to make them eat it.

ST. FRANCIS: They shall be filled, some day.

ST. ELIZABETH: I know; I know. But the babies are so weazened. [*She puts her hands over her ears.*] I thought I might not hear their little helpless, hungry cries, here in the midst of the guns.

TOLSTOY [*in a reminding voice*]: Babies starved before this war.

ST. ELIZABETH: I don't get used to it.

ST. FRANCIS: Blessed are they that mourn. [*He moves past St. Elizabeth, up the altar steps.*] Shall I read?

ST. ELIZABETH: The bomb fell on the Holy Book.

ST. FRANCIS [*almost gaily*]: Since when did I need a book?

TOLSTOY [*quoting, with a twinkle*]: "After that thou shalt have had the psalter, thou wilt be covetous and desire to have a breviary also. And after that thou hast gotten a breviary, thou wilt sit in a chair like a great prelate and wilt say unto thy brother, 'Fetch me the breviary!' "

ST. FRANCIS [*smiling*]: My other Brother Leo used to tell that story on me. Shall I read?

[*St. Elizabeth and Tolstoy rise to hear the Gospel.*]

ST. FRANCIS: "The Holy Gospel is written in the fifth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, beginning at the first verse."

ST. ELIZABETH AND TOLSTOY: Glory be to thee, O Lord!

ST. FRANCIS: "Jesus seeing the multitudes, went up into a high mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,"——

[*While St. Francis is reading these words, the wounded American Soldier appears in the doorway, leaning heavily on the Poilu and supported on his other side by Jeanne d'Arc. In her silver mail, with her white, transparent surcoat all embroidered with the golden lilies of France, she is a splendid ghost. St. Francis pauses, waiting.*]

POILU: It is here a step. Lift up the foot, mon brave.

AMERICAN [*halted, helpless on the threshold*]: "The centipede was happy quite"——

POILU: Mon Dieu! Now he goes off his nuts.

AMERICAN: Not yet, pardner. But they're woozy. I've lost the way to my feet.

[*Jeanne d'Arc lifts his right leg; he sets his foot on the step. The Poilu and Jeanne, half lifting, half dragging him, at last lay him down on the straw below the baptismal font. He sinks into unconsciousness.*]

ST. FRANCIS [*resuming the Gospel*]: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."——

[*The Poilu has hastily snatched off his cap and crossed himself. Jeanne d'Arc stands beside the baptismal font.*]

POILU [*in a startled whisper*]: Qu'est ce que c'est? Mon Dieu, c'est la fête! Mais oui, c'est la Toussaint!

ST. FRANCIS: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."——

AMERICAN [*beginning to come out of his swoon*]: Thirst——

[*The Poilu pours out a little water from his canteen into his cup, and holds the cup to the American's lips.*]

St. Francis: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."——

American: Merci—who's talking?

St. Francis: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."——

American: See God?—Who's talking?

Poilu: Ssh, sh! It is l'Evangile. How do you say? It is the word of Jesus.

American: Jesus talking?—See God?—Lem me have a look? [*He begins to turn his face toward the altar, then hesitates.*] Pure in heart?—Guess I won't chance it. [*He turns his face back again, away from the altar, and shuts his eyes.*]

St. Francis: "Blessed are——

[*The German prisoner appears in the doorway. On one side of him is the young English officer, on the other, St.*

George of England, each with a hand on his shoulder. Over the golden armor of St. George, his golden translucent surcoat gleams magnificent, with its red cross embroidered from throat to hem, on breast and back.]

ST. FRANCIS: "The Peacemakers"——

AMERICAN [*opening his eyes on the group in the doorway*]: Peacemakers?

"And on his breast a bloody cross he bore,
The dear remembrance of his dying Lord."

English 34,—what do you know about that, Frenchy? I made A in that course.

[*The German prisoner and his guards cross the threshold and stand within the church at one side of the doorway.*]

ST. FRANCIS [*repeating*]: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

AMERICAN: Opening up with prayer?—say—have I butted into the Peace Pow Wow? [*With an effort he lifts his head and stares around.*] Queer lookin' bunch.—

Where's Wilson?—Ungh!—Mother! [*He drops back unconscious. Jeanne d'Arc kneels down beside him, tending him.*]

ST. FRANCIS: "Blessed are the——"

GERMAN PRISONER [*staring at Jeanne d'Arc*]: Die Jungfrau von Orleans! Du lieber Gott! [*He makes a bolt for the door, but St. George is before him in the doorway, with arms outspread.*] Geisten! Ich bin verloren!

[*The English officer springs on the Prisoner, catches him by the collar and throws him to his knees at the feet of St. George. Together, St. George and the English Officer lift the Prisoner, stand him on his feet, and push him up the church to the chancel rail.*]

ENGLISHMAN: Sorry to disturb the Service, Father, but my orders were to bring him in here.

[*The scuffle has awakened the Belgian child, who slips out of her niche, rubbing her eyes. Seeing St. Elizabeth be-*

side the chancel rail, she hurries to her, fearfully, and clasps her hand, looking up hungrily into her face. St. George, the German Prisoner, the English Officer, St. Elizabeth, and the Belgian Child, stand at the broken chancel rail.]

ST. FRANCIS [*to the English Officer*]: Take your prisoner over by the wall, brother, and let him sit down in the niche.

ENGLISHMAN: After the reading of the Gospel, Father.

ST. FRANCIS: He is to sit down now. He is all trembling.

[*The English Officer and St. George salute St. Francis and march the Prisoner to the niche. He sinks into it. The Englishman and St. George stand, one on each side of the niche.*]

BELGIAN CHILD [*to St. Elizabeth*]: Madame, a little piece of bread?

ST. FRANCIS: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

BELGIAN CHILD: Madame, I spik Américain,—a little piece of bread?

ST. FRANCIS: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

BELGIAN CHILD: Madame, on a tué ma mere, la bas. Est ce qu'il y a des mots Américains pour dire ça?

ST. FRANCIS: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

[*St. Francis kneels in silent prayer before the riven altar, below the crucifix.*]

ENGLISHMAN [*to Tolstoy, in a low voice*]: I beg pardon; who is this Padre?

TOLSTOY: His name is Francis.

ENGLISHMAN: He omits the Creed?

TOLSTOY: If we have the Gospel, is not that enough?

ENGLISHMAN: I see; A Union Service. [*Regarding Tolstoy doubtfully.*] It is true, the Creed is implicit in the Gospels. But [*his eyes are turned to the kneeling St. Francis*], is it not unusual for a Romanist to conduct Union Services?

TOLSTOY: Not where he comes from.

ENGLISHMAN [*always with his eyes on St. Francis*]: I have understood that they wink at certain irregularities in the mission field, but [*breaking off abruptly*],—Do you know the fresco of St. Francis and the crucified Seraph, in Assisi? [*He makes a gesture toward the kneeling saint*],—Remarkable!

TOLSTOY: No; quite natural.

ENGLISHMAN: You say his name is—— [*He turns startled, baffled eyes upon Tolstoy and stares at him intently.*]

BELGIAN CHILD: Chère Madame,—bread?—A little piece?

[*St. Elizabeth leads the little Belgian to the niche where the German Prisoner is sitting, and stands before him silently.*]

ENGLISHMAN [*to Tolstoy, hurriedly*]: You, too!—I beg pardon, but your face is so familiar, sir. Have I met you before?

TOLSTOY: You have been in Russia?

ENGLISHMAN: No;—but—Russia!—Pardon me; the resemblance is so remarkable, but Tolstoy is—— [*He turns from Tolstoy to St. Francis, and back again to Tolstoy. He looks all around him, slowly, his gaze resting now on St. George, now on St. Elizabeth, now on the group by the font.*]

AMERICAN [*opening his eyes upon Jeanne d'Arc*]:

"Her face so fair, as flesh it seemèd not"——

ENGLISHMAN [*moving over to the group by the font*]: They said there were angels at Mons, but I never——

AMERICAN [*to Jeanne*]: Some frock, that, for a bloody battlefield. [*Dreamily*], "All in a silken Camus, lily white"— How does it go?——

"Which all above besprinkled was throughout
With golden aygulets that glistered bright,
Like twinkling stars."——

Say, which are you, Belphœbe, Britomart?

JEANNE [*smiling*]: No, no; I am Jeanne.

AMERICAN [*slowly*]: Jeanne? [*Then with a sudden shout*], Jeanne the Maid!—Gee, Maud Adams, how you have changed!—That was one on me, wasn't it? I thought you were a Spenserian stanza, and you're the real thing; you're it! Golly! but I'm the happy warrior—Don't—fade out—quite—yet! [*He faints again.*]

BELGIAN CHILD: Bread, Madame!

ST. ELIZABETH [*to the German Prisoner*]: Oh, my son, feel in your pockets. Have you nothing for this child?

[*The German Prisoner puts his hand reluctantly into his trousers pocket and brings out a small hunk of black bread. He holds the bread against his breast, a moment, staring defiantly at St. Elizabeth, then slowly stretches out his hand to the little Belgian, with the bread lying on his open palm.*]

BELGIAN CHILD [*hesitating, putting out her own hand, drawing it back, and looking up into St. Elizabeth's face*]: Madame, j'ai peur qu'il a faim aussi, ce bon monsieur.

GERMAN: Ach, Gott! [*Tears stream down his dirty, swollen face. He puts out his other hand and draws the child between his knees. He holds the bread to her lips and she bites off a morsel, and then her little hand guides his great hand to his mouth. He pretends to nibble, and in turn*

puts the bread to her lips. They smile at each other and at St. Elizabeth.]

ENGLISHMAN [*speaking to the Poilu, who is fanning the American*]: Is the philanthropic lady in the blue cloak a—that is, is she— Who is she?

POILU: I do not know, mon lieutenant. She is perhaps of that band of ladies from America called Smitt Unitt, who bring joy and food to the devastated villages.

JEANNE [*taking the American's head in her lap*]: She is my sister Elizabeth, of Hungary and Thuringia.

ENGLISHMAN: The one who told the lie about the bread and roses?

JEANNE [*smiling*]: The way you put it! How you are English!

ENGLISHMAN [*looking about him, puzzled, musing*]: What would Sir Oliver Lodge make of all this, I wonder? [*To the Poilu*], Do you see the one in the Red

Cross, mon vieux? That is St. George of England.

POILU: Quel type!

ENGLISHMAN: And you, what do you make of it all?

POILU: Of eet all?

ENGLISHMAN: Yes; of St. George,—of Jeanne d'Arc? Did you ever hear of Tolstoy? And yonder friar, rising from his knees, is Francis of Assisi, or I miss my guess,—thirteenth century Saint. And you, and me? What do you make of us all?

POILU [*with a shrug and a quizzical smile*]: Mais, mon lieutenant, c'est la guerre; que voulez vous?

[*St. Francis has risen from his knees and joined St. Elizabeth, who, with Tolstoy, is watching the German Prisoner feed the Belgian Child.*]

ST. FRANCIS: Bravo, cara sorellina mia! This is better than making bread out of roses.

POILU: Roses! Ah, ça! Je m'en souviens. And also their saints are liars, mon lieutenant. Oh, là, là! C'est drôle!

ST. FRANCIS [*looking over his shoulder at the Poilu*]: Are we not all liars, more or less, brother?

JEANNE [*to the Poilu*]: I lied. When the English tortured me, I lied.

TOLSTOY: I lied to myself. All my life I lived a lie, afraid to obey my conscience.

POILU [*with Gallic malice*]: Mais Mademoiselle; mais Monsieur; to admit to the enemy that one makes a faux pas,—ce n'est pas la guerre.

ST. FRANCIS: Fratello mio, on the battle fields where we fight, that is the first step to victory.

JEANNE [*to the Poilu*]: But how am I the enemy of Madame Elizabeth, if we fight on the same side?

POILU [*amazed and disconcerted*]: Comment!

ST. GEORGE: We are all on the one side, we of our communion.

ENGLISHMAN: Our side.

ST. GEORGE: God's side.

ENGLISHMAN: And is that not our side?

ST. GEORGE: If you are of our communion, you will know.

ENGLISHMAN [*hotly*]: I do know.

GERMAN PRISONER [*heavily, to St. Francis*]: The first step to victory, to say you did wrong? Tell that to Ludendorf, to Hindenburg. Tell it to our Kaiser.

ST. FRANCIS: I have their ear. And not I only. We have a committee of perpetual adjuration, whispering, whispering to them, Tirpitz—the Crown Prince,—the Chancellor—night and day.

GERMAN: Aber, they listen, nicht.

ST. FRANCIS [*speaking over his shoulder to the German Prisoner, but moving toward*

the baptismal font]: They do not listen, yet; but they hear. [*He bends over the American Soldier*]: If you are coming my way, brother, I'll wait for you.

AMERICAN [*opening his eyes upon St. Francis, and declaiming in a clear voice*]:

"Tyrants that make men subject to their law,
I will suppress, that they no more may reign;
And lordings curb that commons over-awe.
And all the wealth of rich men to the poor will draw."

Hot stuff, what! I talk it to myself in the trench when I'm on sentry go.—Were you saying something?

GERMAN [*calling from his niche to St. Francis*]: Then, if they will win, they got to say it too, the English. They got to say they did wrong.

ENGLISHMAN: Wrong to keep our word to Belgium? Never!

TOLSTOY [*from his niche, to the Englishman*]: He's not talking about Belgium. The war

didn't begin with Belgium, nor with Serbia. Don't cloud the issue, brother; you who never break faith!

AMERICAN [*who has been turning his head feebly, to try to see the speakers*]: Peace Pow Wow; I remember. Blessed are the peacemakers.

ENGLISHMAN [*rounding upon Tolstoy*]: It is you Russians who cloud the issue, trying to make this a question of our mistakes—sins, if you like—in Egypt, in South Africa, in India. Does France make it a grievance, now, that we burned her Joan of Arc in the fifteenth century? There is no logic in you; it is all made in Germany.

TOLSTOY: I had not so much in mind Egypt, India, South Africa, as some other—mistakes.

ST. FRANCIS [*to the Englishman, eagerly*]: O mio fratello, some of us are not too deeply troubled by the present conflict. It is noisy; it is to be deplored; but it is super-

ficial. The real menace is the war behind the war, beyond the war, within the war.

ENGLISHMAN [*bewildered*]: The war—behind the war, beyond the war, within the war? I don't understand.

ST. GEORGE: My son, until England keeps faith with England, she shall have no peace.

ENGLISHMAN [*still more bewildered*]: Keep faith with—you mean our muddle over the Home Rule Bill?

AMERICAN [*his fever-bright eyes mocking the Englishman*]:

Open my soul and you shall see
Engraved on my conscience—Ireland.

He said England, you duffer. England's not Ireland. He's no Sinn Feiner; he's a member of the British Labor Party.

ST. GEORGE [*unsheathing his sword*]: Amen! —God and St. George for England!

ENGLISHMAN [*at his wits' end*]: The British Labor Party,—St. George?

AMERICAN [*declaiming in his clear, delirious voice, while St. George stands with drawn sword, at salute*]:

"Men of England, heirs of glory,
Heroes of unwritten story,
Nurslings of one mighty mother,
Hopes of her and one another!

"Rise, like lions after slumber,
In unvanquishable number!"

Prompt me, Percy!—

"Men of England, wherefore plough—"

No; I'm mixed.—Never mind; it's all the same dope;

"Men of England, wherefore plough
For the lords who lay ye low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

"Sow seed,—but let no tyrant reap;
Find wealth,—let no impostor heap;
Weave robes,—let not the idle wear;
Forge arms,—in your defence to bear."

ST. GEORGE: Until England keeps faith with England, she shall have no peace.
[*He sheathes his sword.*]

TOLSTOY: [*calling across from his niche*]: Still, it is not quite fair to imply that Shelley advocated violence. He was a non-resistant.

ST. FRANCIS: O Leo mio, who would be consistent? Was not my whole propaganda founded on an inconsistency,—the absurdity that there must always be rich to minister to the little poor ones. But do I regret my propaganda?

TOLSTOY: Yet we failed, Francis Petrovitch, because we were inconsistent, you and I.

ST. FRANCIS: Patience, brother; blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. When you have lived out of the flesh a while longer, you will not be so sure we failed. It is true, we only scratched the surface of our problem. But in our scratches others are ploughing deep, and the seed is in the furrow.

JEANNE D'ARC [*musing*]: Until England keep faith with England, and France keep faith with France.

POILU: And coming from you who are of the ancien régime, loyaliste, Mademoiselle, what does that mean?

JEANNE D'ARC: I was a peasant, in France. For whom did I fight, then? For whom do I fight now?

POILU [*abandoning his cynic tone, and bowing low*]: Ah, Mademoiselle, I never doubted.

ST. ELIZABETH: Until England keep faith with England, and France keep faith with France, and Germany keep faith with Germany,—oh, my hungry poor!

POILU: But you are saints, and you are unhappy? How then, are you in heaven?

ST. ELIZABETH: We are as much in heaven as God is; we are one with God.

ST. FRANCIS: Brother, God gave us earth; but we must give Him heaven.

ENGLISHMAN: But the war behind the war, beyond the war, within the war?

GERMAN [*suddenly, from his niche*]: Ich verstehe jetzt! Im Himmel die Heiligen lesen Marx und Engels.

ENGLISHMAN [*surly and suspicious*]: What do you say?

GERMAN: I say that the war behind the war. beyond the war, within the war, is the Class War. Warum nicht?

ENGLISHMAN: Do you say so, Brother Francis?

ST. FRANCIS: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

TOLSTOY: Or, as the Gospel according to St. Luke has it,—Blessed be ye poor; for yours is the Kingdom of God.

GERMAN [*reasoning laboriously*]: Und so, you will say, if Heaven is the gift we give to God, and not around the other way about; and if the poor, they are the ones that

make heaven, they are the Himmelsarbeitern, why—then—the more we have of poor, the bigger is the gift——

ENGLISHMAN [*impatiently, to St. Francis*]: Is this an answer?

ST. FRANCIS: Is it not?—Of course, I assume that you accept my premise, which is Christ.

TOLSTOY: Take my Russia for an answer, if it suits you better.

POILU: Merci beaucoup. But if it is the Kingdom of Heaven in Russia, I will prefer to go to Paris, en permission.

TOLSTOY: Ah, no; I do not ask you to accept what they do in Russia, for an answer,—not yet,—but what they dream.

POILU: I have to take already the Church on that trust; not what she do but what she dream. But Russia, non! How do you say, mon lieutenant.—I am fool up?

[*The American has been lying with eyes closed, as if oblivious to the discussion.*

Now he opens his fevered eyes, and looking up through and beyond the faces bending above him, he chants,]

"Such is the weakness of all mortal hope,
So fickle is the state of earthly things;
That, ere they come unto their aimèd scope,
They fall too short of our frail reckonings,
And bring us bale and bitter sorrowings"——

[*He becomes aware of the listening, pitying faces, and smiles.*] Blessed are the peacemakers. Wake me up when they finish scrapping over Alsace-Lorraine.

[*He closes his eyes, and in the voice of one withdrawn, who meditates aloud, he says,*]

"O, goodly usage of those antique times,
In which the sword was servant unto right;
When not for malice and contentious crimes,
But all for praise and proof of manly might,
The martial brood accustomèd to fight.
Then honour was the meed of victory,
And yet the vanquishèd had no despite.
Let later age that noble use envy,
Vile rancour to avoid and cruel surquedry."

[*Jeanne d'Arc motions to the Poilu, who wets the American's lips.*]

ENGLISHMAN [*in a low voice, to the Poilu*]: Has a surgeon seen him?

[*The Poilu nods. Tolstoy comes from his niche and stands with the others, looking down on the American. The German follows, with St. Elizabeth and the Belgian Child.*]

AMERICAN [*opening his eyes and smiling on them all*]:

"And yet the vanquishèd had no despite."

Kiddie, would you mind fanning me a little while?

[*The Englishman takes the cap from under his own helmet and gives it to the little Belgian, with a fanning gesture. She kneels beside the American and fans him gently. Tolstoy and the others kneel in a half circle round the wounded man. After a pause, the discussion is resumed quietly. The Ameri-*

can lies with eyes closed, breathing faintly.]

ENGLISHMAN [*to St. Francis*]: From your point of view, I suppose the disposition of Alsace-Lorraine is not important.

ST. FRANCIS: No; I do not say that. It is one of the things that must be settled.

ENGLISHMAN: And how?

ST. ELIZABETH [*breaking into the conversation*]: My Germany must be generous and relinquish those provinces.

POILU: Generous! She must be just.

ST. ELIZABETH: Do you be just, and remember that long ago she had them first. Let her be generous. She needs to be generous, for her soul's health.

JEANNE D'ARC: And it shall be the part of France to give them the plébicite.

ENGLISHMAN: But Toynbee says the plébicite may be defeated perhaps by the geographical distribution of the French and

German sympathizers.—Have you read Toynbee?

ST. FRANCIS: The nephew, you mean, not the saint? I know his point of view. But geography and race must break down if conscience and goodwill storm the barriers. It is a question of brotherly love.

ENGLISHMAN: But that is a counsel of perfection.

ST. FRANCIS: What other counsel did you expect from me?

POILU: Touché!

AMERICAN [*smiling, with eyes closed*]: Go to it, fellas!

GERMAN PRISONER [*to St. Elizabeth*]: Gnädige Frau, for why Germany must give up?

ST. ELIZABETH: My son, have you not heard, she is the greater aggressor in this war?

GERMAN: I don't hear that in Germany. And if I hear it in France, why shall I believe it?

AMERICAN [*speaking always with closed eyes*]: Oh, Fritzie, cultivate a mind of your own; be a sport.

ENGLISHMAN [*to St. Francis*]: And do you ask me to believe that this Bolshevik display in Russia is a manifestation of brotherly love?

ST. FRANCIS: Ay di me! No!

TOLSTOY [*in a voice of anguish*]: No; but it is love in the making. Ah, brother, do not spoil the brew. Yours is the touchstone to transmute this alchemy, and will you have it hell-broth? O France! O England! O mine Enemy!—We must all drink of that cup. America! America!

AMERICAN [*opening wide eyes and panting slightly*]: Somebody called me—Was it France?—I was a long way off—somewhere—thinking about the—pure in heart.

ST. FRANCIS: Not France only, brother; we are all calling you.

AMERICAN [*communing with himself*]: And they might call and call,—and I might come—and come—But if I'm not pure in heart—nothing doing. [*For a moment, his lips move voicelessly; then, on a sudden, he sits erect in the midst of the watchers.*] For their sakes—I must see God—It's up to me! [*He drops back on the straw.*]

[*The others kneel in silence a few moments around the American's body. Then Jeanne d'Arc folds his hands across his breast, and the Poilu closes the dead eyes. St. George crosses the feet as crusaders' feet are crossed on old tombs.*]

ST. FRANCIS [*making the sign of the cross above the American's body*]: Praised be my Lord for our Sister, the death of the body, from which no man escapeth—Blessed are they who are found walking by thy most holy will, for the second death shall have no power to do them harm.

ENGLISHMAN: "O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for those who unfeignedly love thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

THE SPIRIT OF THE AMERICAN [*seen standing in the doorway, radiant in the moonlight*]: Those unspeakable joys! O Brother Francis, Brother Francis, will you show me the shortest road to Paradise? I cannot wait.—We'll just stop long enough, on our way, to buck up the Alpini.

ST. FRANCIS [*joining the Spirit of the American in the doorway, and lifting up hands in benediction upon those others, who kneel in the church beside the dead body*]: Praised be my Lord for all those who pardon one another for his love's sake, and who endure weakness and tribulation:

blessed are they who peaceably shall endure, for thou, O Most Highest, shall give them a crown.

AMERICAN SPIRIT [*holding out his hands in joyful appeal*]: Blessed are the pure in heart!—Wish me luck, fellas!

BELGIAN CHILD [*rising from her knees, and kissing her hand to the Spirit of the American*]: Au revoir, Monsieur l'Américain; sois béni!

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